

CHARITY
THE ONLY
Certain INFALLIBLE NOTE
OF A
TRUE CHURCH.

Wherein,

The **SCRIPTURE** **NOTION** of **CHARITY**
is Stated; and, by the **PRACTICE** thereof, the
CHURCH of *ENGLAND* proved to
be the **BEST** and **PUREST** in the **WORLD**.
Together with the **POWER** and **EFFICACY** of
the **CHRISTIAN DUTY** of

ALMS-GIVING.

By **ROBERT GRIFFITH**, Rector of *K
Woolaston*, in *Gloucester-shire*.

London:

Printed for *R. Gosling* in *Fleet-street*, *C. Rivington*,
in *St. Paul's Church Yard*, and *J. Palmer*, Book-
seller in *Gloucester*; and are to be sold by *T. Warner* in *Pater-Noster-Row*. 1721.





TO

The Honoured,

Edward Colston, Esq.;

Sometime Merchant and Citizen

OF

B R I S T O L.

Honoured SIR,



HEN I had resolved upon the Publication of the following Treatise, I could not pitch upon a more proper Person to inscribe it to, than your self, the Subject - Matter thereof, having been the chiefest Delight and Employment of Your Life. For I may be

A

bold

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bold to challenge the Christian World to produce such another Instance of any Private Person, who hath laid out his Charities so Prudently, so Benefically, and so much to the Purposes of Life and Religion, as You have done.

THE End therefore, of this Dedication is, to propose You to the World, as the most perfect *Pattern* of Charity, that these latter Ages of the Church have produc'd; and, to convince our Adversaries, that the Genuine Sons of the Church of *England* are no less exemplary for their Piety and Good Works, than for their Orthodox Belief and Principles. This SIR, is the Reason, which prevail'd with me to assume such a Liberty, which (I was sure) your great Humility would not give You leave to Grant.

WITHOUT all Peradventure, they who like nothing but their own Compositions, will condemn my Arrogancy in presuming to fix so great a Name to so mean a Performance, without

Your

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Your Knowledge or Consent; but my Apology is, the more inconsiderable I look upon my self to be, the greater Object of Charity; and in so much greater Need I stand of a Patron, who is as eminent for his great Compassion and Humanity, as for his Piety and Liberality. Addresses of this Nature, I confess, are commonly most welcome to vain-glorious and statizing Men, whose imaginary Merits rise and fall with the Applause and Breath of the People; and all the Good they procure is, the rendring Vain Men yet still more Vain in other Mens Opinion, as well as their own.

BUT as he that would describe your Vertues, can never be guilty of Flattery in the Opinion of all good Christians, so, I hope Christianity is not come to that pass amongst us, that we must be afraid to put Men in Mind of their Duties, by commending the Virtues which they cannot imitate. A Charitable Man is indeed a great Eye-sore to Hypocrites,

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and the Worldly Minded: For they who make *Gain* their *Godliness* will not have the Ingenuity, much less the Grace to admire that *Charity* which they cannot practice themselves.

AND it is no Wonder, that the Enemies of our Church are so void of true Charity towards God or toward their Brethren, who place all Religion in mere Speculation, and spend all their time in hearing or advancing some new strange Opinion, which serve to busie their Brains, but signifies nothing towards the purifying their Hearts, or reforming their Lives.

How many strange Doctrines, have of late been propagated, how greedily imbib'd by illiterate Mechanicks, and how obstinately defended by Men, whose Zeal for Religion, discovers it self in nothing more than in opposing all others; as if the common Cause of Christianity depended upon a distinct Knowledge of such Points, as are not discoverable by Human Reason, but by plain Scripture and

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and Revelation. If this licentious Humour Prevails, it is easy to foretell the Consequence: For Men of this fluctuating Temper, *who are toss'd to and fro*, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine; who change Sides and Sects, Opinions and Parties, as their Interest leads them; who are ever Learning, and never able to come to the Knowledge of the Truth. These Men, I say, not only destroy the Peace of the Church, but come at last, to be of no Religion at all. So that in Truth, they are never less Religious than when they make such a Noise and Stir about Religion; for true Religion, saith the Apostle, is first *pure*, then *Peaceable*, *Gentle*, *easy to be entreated*, full of *Mercy and Good Works*. They therefore who cannot sacrifice their Private Opinions to the Publick Peace: They who cannot govern their Pens, as well as their Tongues, and learn to Write as well as to speak well, of their Governours, such Mens *Religion is Vain*:

For

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For Pure Religion, saith St. James, and undefil'd before God, is this, to visit the Fatherless and Widow in their Affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the World. How well Sir, You have transcrib'd this Doctrine into Practice, your fervent and Reverent Devotion, Your constant Attendance on the Publick Service of the Church, Your frequent Celebration of the Blessed Sacrament, Your Unwearied and Successful Endeavours, to promote Virtue and discourage Vice; Your Zeal and Afection for the Establish'd Church, and for those who attend at her Altars; and above all, Your unparallel'd Bounty, Your great, well-plac'd, well-chosen Charities, sufficiently demonstrate.

I had not indeed, ventur'd to incur Your Displeasure, in publishing the following imperfect Account of your Publick Charities, but with a Design to excite Gentlemen of like Fortune to be Liberal and Charitable after your Example; and to shew them withal, that

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that there is no true happiness without God, nor any pleasure without the satisfaction of a good Conscience. If the Gentlemen of our Country would but pursue your Steps,, neither the Complaints, nor Cries, Number, nor Necessities of the Poor, would be so great as they are. But the Misfortune is, Men of the greatest Estates, find them little enough to Support their Pride and Vanity, Lust and Luxury; and instead of having any thing to spare for the Poor, rather daily increase their number, by withholding their just Dues and Hire from them : It would be happy for their Families, for their Country, and for themselves, if your good Example could influence these sort of Gentlemen to quit this vain, this roving, this uncertain and distracted way of Living, and turn their Thoughts to the proper Busines which God sent them into the World to do.

We meet with a few of these Gentlemen *here and there*, who after an useless indolent

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indolent Life, of Softness, Intemperance, and Debauchery, can be content, upon their Death-bed, to leave to the Poor, what they can enjoy no longer, by way of Composition, or Atonement for their Sins, which is not only being Charitable against their Wills, but being so likewise at an other's Expence. For at his Death the Property of every Mans Estates devolves to God; and then it is he that gives the Charity, and not the deceas'd; for he gave none of it whilst he could keep it; not till God took it from him. It is true the Receivers of such a Charity are the better for it, what ever the Mind of the givers be. And though such Charities are not to be discountenanced, yet we cannot say so much good of them, as of those Charities which are bestowed in a Mans Lifetime, when he can satisfie himself that they are neither stifled nor misapplied. You then Sir, began to lay the Foundation of your Charities, when Men at such Years, are most apt to Indulge

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Indulge their lust, and thirst for greatness and popularity. You then converted the greatest part of Your Estate to Charitable Uses, when you cou'd shew so much contempt of the World, as to deny yourself that Pomp and Grandeur, Attendance and Retinue, which so considerable a part of unthinking Mankind so much value themselves upon; and this shews, that God can call you to nothing too difficult, or irksome, which you cannot chearfully comply with, and undergoe, for the Service of Religion, and the Good of your Fellow-Creatures. It is to your Example in a great degree, that we owe the great increase of Charity-Schools, erected all over the Kingdom, since your's; which I the rather mention, because this is really the best, the greatest and the most Beneficial of all Charities; because it is for the preserving of the Souls as well as the Bodies of Men, and doing good in every Generation to the End of the World. And if he who converteth a Sinner from the

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the Error of his way, shall save a Soul from Death, and cover a multitude of Sins, how great must be your Reward, whom God hath rais'd to be the Instrument of saving so many thousand Souls not only from future Damnation, but from present want and Misery, and Ruin. I have a copious Subject before me, if my Pen was equal to my Inclination, or was not afraid to trespass upon your Patience: But I know that Panegyricks, and Encomiums cannot be welcome to a Gentleman of your strict Virtue and self Denial; and therefore I only beseech God to prolong your Days, and multiply them as the Sand, for the good you have done to my Brethren, and to the House of our God, and to the numerous poor whom you Feed and Cloath, Which Sir, is the Earnest, and hearty Prayer, of Sir,

28 SE 60

London
May 25
1721.

Your most Obedient
Humble Servant

ROB. GRIFFITH.

Some ACCOUNT of EDWARD COLSTON, *Esq*; his Publick Charities, in the City of BRISTOL, and to the Clergy.

1. M R. Colston founded an Hospital, on St. Austin's back, wherein are a 100 Boys, for whose Maintenance he has given a 1000*l. per Ann.* and Ten Pound to each Boy (when fit to be plac'd out) to bind him an Apprentice, he allows Ten Pound *per Ann.* to a Minister to teach them the Church Catechism.

2. He also founded an Alms-house on St. Michaels Hill, in the said City, wherein are 12 old Men, and 12 Women. To each is allow'd 3*s. per Week*; but the Eldest of the Men who I suppose is in the Nature of a Governor (and therefore call'd the eldest Brother) has 6*s. per Week*. Besides which, every one has a Dozen Horse load of Coals every Year for firing. They have publick Prayers every Day except Wednesdays and Fridays, when they have Prayers in their Parish Church, and for this he has given Ten Pound a Year.

3. In the Merchants Alms-house in Kings-street, he maintains 6 old decay'd Seamen at 2*s. per Week*.

4. In Queen *Elizabeth's Hopital* near the *College-Green Bristol*, he maintains 6 Boys, at Ten Pound a Year each Boy, and Ten Pound he gives to place him out Apprentice.

5. In *Temple-street Bristol*, he built a Free-School for the Education of 40 Boys, whom he Cloaths once a Year, and allows Ten Pound a Year to the Master.

6. To the Charity Schools of St. *Mary-Redclift*, and other Parishes, within the City, he has bestow'd large Sums of Money for the Maintenance and Education of poor Children.

7. To most of the Churches in *Bristol*, he has given several Hundreds of Pounds towards the Repairing and Beautifying of the same.

8. For Publick Prayers every *Monday* and *Tuesday*, at all *Saints*, he has given Six Pound *per Annum*.

9. For a Sermon once a Month to the Prisoners in *Newgate, Bristol*, he has given 6 Pound a Year.

10. He also founded a Lecture in the said City, of 14 Sermons to be Preached every *Wednesday* and *Friday* in *Lent*, at the Parish Churches of St. *Werberg* and St. *Peter*, upon the several Subjects following *viz.*

1. *Ashwednesday*, a Sermon upon the Lent Fast.

2. *Friday*,

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2. *Friday*, a Sermon against Atheism and Infidelity.

2d Week in Lent.

3. *Wednesday*, a Sermon upon the *Catholic-Church*.

4. *Friday*, a Sermon upon the Excellency of the Church of *England*.

3d. Week in Lent.

5. *Wednesday*, a Sermon upon the Powers of the Church.

6. *Friday*, a Sermon upon the Necessity of *Water-baptism*.

4th Sunday in Lent.

7. *Wednesday*, a Sermon upon Confirmation,

8. *Friday*, a Sermon upon Confession and Absolution.

5th Week in Lent.

9. *Wednesday*, against the Errors of the the *Roman Church*.

10. *Friday*, against *Enthusiasm*, or Negative *Superstition*.

6th Week in Lent.

11 *Wednesday*, upon the Necessity of *Restitution*.

12. *Friday*, a Sermon upon the Necessity of Frequenting *Divine Service*.

7th Week in Lent.

13. *Wednesday*, upon Frequent Communion.

14 Good Friday, a Sermon upon the
Passion of our Saviour.

Note, These Sermons are all Preach'd
by different Persons, who are Generally In-
cumbents of Churches within the City, for
which they are allowed 20 l. per Ann. that
is, five and twenty Shillings for every Ser-
mon, and the remainder between the Clerks
&c.

Lastly, Mr. Colston has also lately lodg-
ed in the Hands of the Governours of the
Bounty of Queen Anne to the poor Clergy,
6000 l. for the Augmentation of sixty small
Vicarages or Livings, who will be by this
Charity, entitled to 16 or 20 l. per Annum,
Addition to their former Sallaries; whereof
these following Churches are already Aug-
mented *viz*

1. The Vicarage of *Studland* in the
County of *Dorset* and Diocese of *Bristol*.
2. The Vicarage of *Inscombe* in the Coun-
ty of *Somerset* and Diocese of *Bath and
Wells*.
3. The Church of *Horsfield* in the Coun-
ty of *Gloucester* and Diocese of *Bristol*.
4. The Vicarage of *Sutton-Benger* in the
County of *Wilts*, and Diocese of *Sarum*.
5. The Vicarage of *Great-Coxwell* in the
County of *Berks* and Diocese of *Sarum*.
6. The Vicarage of *Huish* with the Cha-
pel of *Laying-Port* in the County of *So-
merset*

Somerset and Diocese of *Bath and Wells*.

7. The Vicarage of *Evensham* in the County and Diocese of *Oxford*.

8. The Church of *Westbury*, in the County of *Gloucester* and Diocese of *Bristol*.

9. The Church of *Felton*, alias *Whitechurch*, in the County of *Gloucester* and Diocese of *Bristol*.

10. The Church of *Stapleton* in the County of *Gloucester* and Diocese of *Bristol*.

11. The Rectory of *Kettering* in the County of *Northampton* and Diocese of *Peterborough*.

12. The Rectory of *Axe-bridge* in the County of *Somerset* and Diocese of *Bath and Wells*.

13. The Vicarage of *Amwell*, in the County of *Hereford*.

14. The Rectory of St. *Laurence* in the City of *Winchester*.

15. The Prebend of *Dinder* with Cure of Souls in the County of *Somerset*, and Diocese of *Bath and Wells*.

16. The Vicarage of *Turk-dean*, in the County and Diocese of *Gloucester*.

17. The Church of *Bower Chalk*, alias *Bur-Chalk*, in the County of *Wilts* and Diocese of *Sarum*.

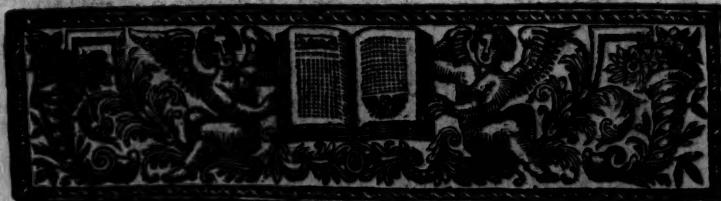
There are forty three Churches more to be augmented, by Vertue of this Bounty, which the Governours of Queen *Anne's Bounty*, looked upon as so Prudent and so well placed

a Charity, that when *Tho. Edwards* Sen. of *Bristol* Esq; had given them an Account thereof, they ordered the thanks of the Board to be given to Mr. *Colston*, by the said Mr. *Edwards*.

I have not been able to get any Particular Account of his Public Charities in and about *London*, &c. which may be depended upon; the greatest part of the Annual Income of his Estate he distributes in Private Charities, some times setting up broken Tradesmen, Paying their Debts, Releasing others out of Prison, and Relieving unhappy Sufferers, and Poor House-keepers whom he diligently seeks out, particularly in the City of *Bristol*; and tho' at first he converted the greatest part of his Estate to Build and Endow Hospitals, yet, as I am credibly inform'd, his Estate at this Time is fairer then it was before those Foundations were laid; so that like a Spring, his Bounty pours forth, but to be replenish'd, and is replenish'd but to pour forth.

Reader, if thou art a Rich Man, consider also that thou art a Christian; and let this great Mans Example Instruct thee, *to be rich in Good Works*, that thou mayst be rich for thy latter End; and that in the Mean Time God may encrease thy Store, Prolong thy Days upon Earth, make thy Name and Memory precious to Posterity, and in the End receive thee unto himself.

THE



THE

PREFACE.

ISuppose every honest Christian will agree with me, that a Treatise of Charity can never be more needful, than at this Time, when the Divisions and Animosities of Christians are at such a Height; when the *Kingdoms of the World* are shaken, when Men Study nothing more than the Satisfaction of their Lusts, their Pride and Avarice, Luxury and Ambition; when every thing looks mean and trifling that is Moral or Good, and nothing *relishable* or *polite*, but what is *Atheistical, Filthy, or Prophane*.

It is amazing and lamentable to behold the Bitterness and Revenge, the Hatred and Enmity, wherewith Christians in our Days Prosecute and Persecute one another, under

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ii The *PREFACE.*

the specious Pretence of Religion; when nothing can be so opposite to, nothing so destructive of, the Spirit and Life thereof, as Strife and Contention. The Design therefore of the ensuing Treatise, is to shew, that the Power and Energy of Religion consists in Peace and Love, Unity and Concord; that no Man can be denominated a true Christian, who has not *Charity* in that Sense, wherein we are commanded to bear the *Infirmities of our Weak Brethren*. Now to maintain that our Lord hath promised to secure his *Church* from Errors; and upon that Pretence, to proceed to extirpate Those who will not *hear her*, is, in Effect, to impeach him of a Breach of Promise to his *Church*; which has not been at any time free from Errors, since the Apostles Days. So that we must either say, that our Blessed Saviour came into the World, to set *one Part of it* to destroy *another*, or else, that he hath prescrib'd no other Remedy for the Cure of *its* Divisions, but mutual Love and Forbearance.

The Grand Objection, which I foresee, will be made to the following Discourse, is, that we Protestants cannot pretend to *Charity* in its most comprehensive Sense; or as *it* signifies the *Love of Unity*, which *Roman Catholicks* say, we have destroy'd, by our Departure from the

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the *Head*, and *Cement* of Unity, the Bishop and Church of *Rome*.

I confess indeed, that *Charity* cannot be maintain'd without Unity with our Bishop, and therefore, that nothing less than sinful Terms of Communion, could have justified our Separation from *Rome*, supposing her Bishop the Supreme Head of the Church. But it happens unluckily, that the several Advocates of the Supremacy, cannot agree in telling their own Story; for it has been controverted among *Romanists* themselves, whether this *Supremacy* be entail'd upon the Bishop of *Rome*, as Successor of St. *Peter* or of St. *Paul*. That the Bishop of *Rome* is Successor to one or other of the Apostles, cannot be denied; but so are all other Bishops, as well as *He*, and he can have no Authority over them, much less the Bishops of *Britain*, as Successors of St. *Peter*, because St. *Peter* had no Authority over the rest of the Apostles; which is a Point, which has been so often already irrefragably prov'd beyond Contradiction, that I have no need to renew a Controversy, for which (I confess) I have neither Capacity nor Learning equal to the Undertaking.

But thus much I may presume to say (I hope without Offence) that if more Weight had been laid upon the Authority of St. *Luke*, and less upon the Testimony of *Partys-*

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Writers, this Dispute, in my Opinion, had been long since at an End. For whoever carefully reads over the History of the Acts of the Apostles, will not once find, that St. Peter ever preach'd at *Rome*, much less, that he planted the Gospel *there*, before St. Paul, who is the only Person, of all the Apostles, who is said to have gone *Thither*; and, where St. Luke tells us, he dwelt two whole Years in *his own bir'd House*, receiving all that came to him to hear the Gospel at his Mouth, *Acts 28. 30*, *Clemens Romanus Lib. 7. Chap. 47*. Saith, *Linus*, the first Bishop of *Rome*, was created by St. Paul; that after the Death of this *Linus*, *Clemens*, the second Bishop, was ordain'd by St. Peter: So that if *this* Story be true, the Bishop of *Rome* sits not in St. Peter's Chair, but in that of St. Paul; for he constituted the first Bishop.

It seem'd Good to the Wisdom of the Holy Ghost to direct St. Luke, to begin with the *Labours* of St. Peter, and to end with those of St. Paul, the *Acts* of which two Apostles, make up the greatest Part of his History.

This was done (as we may guess) to shew, that our Saviour made good to St. Peter in his own Person, his gracious Promise, in that famous *Text*, (so often and grossly perverted) *Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock, I will build*

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build my Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it. Now Peter was a Sir-name which our Lord gave him upon his confessing him to be the true *Messiah*, and in the *Greek* and *Latin* Tongues, signifies a *Stone*, as they, who understand the Oriental Languages say, *Cephas* signifies the same in *Syriac*. The Church is said to be built upon the Foundation of the Apostles, *Jesus Christ* himself being the Chief Corner Stone. The proper use of a Stone-Foundation, is to Build upon, and a Key is to open a Door with; both which, (by a beautiful Figure) are applied by our Saviour to the Person of St. *Peter*, who according to our Saviour's Promise, was by his Preaching to build his Church, or to open a Door of *Faith* to Jews and Gentiles, before any other Apostle.

We then confess that the first Christian Church was Built upon St. Peter's Preaching, and that the Church thus founded, the Gates of *Hell shall not prevail against*; the Import of which Promise is, that *Christianity*, thus planted, shall become the prevailing Religion of the World, and continue to the End of it. The Completion of the former part of this Promise the Evangelist takes Care to record in the very Introduction to his History, where he tells us, that St. *Peter* upon his two first Sermons, Converted Three Thousand

Jews

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Jews in one Day, and Five Thousand the next. *Acts 2. 41. Acts 4. 4.* Sometime after this, upon the *Persecution which arose about Stephen*, all these new Converts were dispersed, except the Apostles, who still continued at *Jerusalem*, because their Commission was to begin *there*; and labour the Conversion of the *Jews*, first.

Accordingly we find, that they who were scatter'd abroad, travelled as far as *Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch*, but preach'd the Gospel to none, but to the *Jews only*. *Acts 2, 19*; about this time, St. *James* suffers Martyrdom, and St. *Peter* is apprehended and put in Prison.

Sure this could not be the time meant by *Simeon Metaphrastes*, who tells us a Tale of St. *Peter's* travelling as far as *Britain* and planting the Gospel there) whose Authority many *Roman Catholick* Writers follow) tho' *Beronius* gives him this Character. *Sicut in alijs multis (saith he) ibi, viz. libris a se positis errare Metaphrastem certum est, ita in his hallucinatum esse constat: (i.e.)* As in many other Stories deliver'd in his Writings, *Metaphrastes* was certainly mistaken; so in these it is plain, that he was bewitch'd or besides himself.

Now, the Travels of the rest of the Apostles, being so diligently and particularly recorded by Writers of all Sorts, *Greek and Latin*,

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Latin, how is it possible (saith Dr. *Goodwin*) that this so important a Work of St. *Peter*, should be mentioned no where, either in our Particular Chronicles or the general History of our Church, nor amongst any of our Ancient Writers, save only by the Hands of *Metaphrastes*? An Author not very Ancient, (for he lived about the Year 900) and so far distant from *Britain*, as *Constantinople*: As he had not such special Opportunity to take Notice of those Antiquities of our Church, which so many other abler Men, and diligent Enquirers into these Things, dwelling amongst us, could never find out.

Bellarmin on the contrary describes, the Travels of St. *Peter* thus. *Igitur ex Judea &c.* (i. e.) The 5th Year after the Passion of our Saviour, *Peter* travell'd from *Judea* into *Syria*, and settled himself at *Antioch* (tho' by the By, there is not a Word said in the *Acts of the Apostles*, that *Peter* Preach'd at *Antioch* ; for that City seem'd to be the peculiar Province of *Paul* and *Barnabas*) there, says *Bellarmin*, he continued Bishop almost seven Years. Nevertheless, saith he, we are not to believe, that in all this Space, he never departed thence; for it is plain, that about that time, he rang'd over all the Countries adjoining, viz. *Pontus, Asia, Gallatia, Cappadocia, Bythinia*. But the 7th Year after that he became the (*pretended*) Bishop of *Antioch*, (which

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(which was the 13th Year after our Lord's Passion) he return'd to *Jerusalem*, and being there apprehended of *Herod*, he was cast into Prison, in the Days of *Sweet Bread*, i. e. about *Easter*, *Acts.* 12. But soon after, continues he, that is, the same Year of the Reign of *Claudius*, he came to *Rome*, and there fixed his See, and held the same 25 Years. Yet he remain'd not all this time in *Rome*, but after he had Preach'd seven Years there, he return'd to *Jerusalem*, being expell'd out of *Rome* by *Claudius*, together with all the *Jews*, who were then in *Rome*. And then a little after, when therefore saith he, they who were at *Antioch*, heard how that St. *Peter* was come to *Jerusalem*, they sent unto him *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and then was call'd together the Council of *Jerusalem*. But *Claudius* being dead, *Peter* return'd to *Rome*, and there ended his Life. Thus *Bellarmin*, Tom. 1. *de Rom. Pon. lib. 2. c. 6.* Here we find *Metaphrastes* and his Followers against *Bellarmin*, and *Bellarmin* against them all: And how well all these fine Stories accord with the History of the *Acts*, it will be worth while briefly to enquire; for here we find nothing of St. *Peter's* Preaching, either at *Antioch* or at *Rome*, tho' St. *Luke* is very particular in recording the most Noted Places which he visited. For,

First

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First, When the Churches had Rest from the foremention'd Persecution, throughout all *Judea, Gallilee, and Samaria*, (all which were the particular Provinces, of St. *Peter*) he passeth throughout all the Quarters of the *Jews*. From *Jerusalem* he is sent by the rest of the Apostles there, to strengthen and confirm the Disciples, whom *Philip* Convert-ed and Baptiz'd in *Samaria*. From thence, passing several Towns, and working Miracles every where, he came and dwelt sometime at *Joppa*. From this Place, by immediate Revelation, he goes to *Cæsarea*, to the Con-
version of *Cornelius*, his *Kinsmen and Friends*, who, by this Means became the first Fruits of the *Gentiles*.

Here then was a full and compleat Dis-charge of our Saviour's Promise, made to him in the first Part of that Text, *viz. Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock, &c.* Thus our Lord Built his Church upon St. *Peter*, of whom we have no farther Account in the *Acts*, than that sometime after these things, and his Miraculous Escape out of Prison, he return'd back to *Cæsarea*, and *there Abode*: which signifies something more than his bare flying thither for Refuge, from the Rage of *Herod*, for a short space of Time; because the Evangelist says expressly, that St. *Peter here Abode*. What became of him after these Things, St. *Luke* does not say; and

as

x The *P R E F A C E*

(as far as we can find) they who are most concerned to know, are not yet agreed upon. Let us therefore proceed to enquire briefly, whether St. *Paul* had not a better Title to the *See of Rome*, than St. *Peter*, keeping still to the Authority of the Scriptures, as the safest to be relied upon, in *this*, and all other Religious Controversy, because of the great disagreement of Party-Writers.

When the *Gospel* was first Publish'd, *Rome* was the Seat of the Empire, and Mistress of the Heathen World. Who then more proper to be her Apostle, than St. *Paul*, who is emphatically Stil'd, the Apostle of the *Gentiles*, and was a Free-born *Roman*, as he himself testifies, *Acts* 22. 25. *Rome* was at this time, full of Wise-men and Philosophers, as well as the Cities of *Athens*, *Ephesus*, *Corinth*, *Antioch*, where St. *Paul* Preach'd; and who, of all the Apostles, was so well qualified, to encounter them, as St. *Paul*? Who more likely to convince the *Romans*, than a *Roman*?

St. *Paul* was a Man of great Parts and Abilities, as well as Resolution, and Courage, having been bred up at the Feet of *Gamaliel*, a *Doctor of the Law*, or a Learned Rabbin; and was moreover skill'd in all the Wisdom of the *Grecians*, who then were accounted the greatest Philosophers; as appears from his citing some of their Authors, as

Epi-

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Epimenides, Menandes, &c. in the *Act's*, and his Epistles to the *Corinthians*, and *Titus*.

Another Reason, why our Saviour thought St. *Paul* fitter to be an Apostle of the *Gentiles*, than St. *Peter*, was, because he had formerly Persecuted the first Christian Converts of the *Jews*. Whence we find the Apostles themselves assaying at first to associate with him, fearing he had changed his Religion, only as a Cloak to cover his former Designs of betraying, and then destroying them. On the other Hand, the unbelieving *Jews*, were the more exasperated against him, for having deserted them; and therefore look'd upon him as a Person, who was not fit to be trusted by either side. Now this seems to be the plain Reason, why our Saviour told him immediately upon his Conversion, that his Country-men would not receive his *Testimony concerning him*, and therefore that he would send him far away from them, to the *Gentiles*, *Act's 22. 18.* accordingly St. *Paul* challenges to himself, the peculiar Title of, the *Apostle of the Gentiles*, and *Rome*, as his particular Province or Diocese, *Rom. 11. 13.*

Now, had St. *Peter* (as the famous *Bellarmin* doth suppose) preach'd at *Rome* Seven Years together before St. *Paul*, why would St. *Paul*, be so desirous to Preach the Gospel, there also; after his express Declaration, in his

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his Epistle to the *Romans*, that it was not his Custom, to Preach the Gospel, where Christ had been already named, least he *should seem to build upon another Man's Foundation?* Rom. 15. 20.

In the very beginning of his Epistle, he tells the *Romans*, that he had for many Years, earnestly desir'd to come to them, that he *might impart unto them some spiritual Gift*, and this too, that thereby they might be establish'd, *Acts 1 11.* now what had *Peter* been doing there all this while? Was he insufficient for this Work, or so negligent in the Execution of his Office, as that in 7 Years time, he could not confirm them in the Faith? Or who can believe *St. Paul*, when he saith, that the few Christians at *Rome*, needed his coming to them, to the end, *that they might be establish'd*, if *St. Peter* had been either then at *Rome*, or at any time before.

Again in the close of his Epistle, *St. Paul* salutes all the Christians at *Rome* of his acquaintance, by Name, but takes no notice of *St. Peter*: And *St. Luke* tells us, that *Aquila*, and *Priscilla* came to *Corinth*, when *Claudius* had expell'd the *Jews* from *Rome*; but makes no mention of *St. Peters* coming then to *Judea*, as *Bellarmin* doth. Now had *St. Peter* been at *Rome*, either at this time, or when *St. Paul*, writ his Epistle to the *Romans*, how unlikely is it, he should not have been once mention'd

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tion'd, either by St. *Luke*, or St. *Paul*, as well as other Christians of lesser Note. It is strange if he was then at *Rome*, they should both forget him. Was a supreme Apostle so inconsiderable a Person, as not to deserve to be once remembred to his own immediate Flock? Or, if he was then at *Antioch*, when St. *Paul* took upon him to write to them in his absence, one would think, he should have had so much respect for his Superior Apostle, as once to mention his Name, or put them in mind of their Obedience and Duty to him.

Moreover, when after this, St. *Paul* arriv'd at *Rome* the first time, there is mention made of the Brethren who accompanied him from *Appij-forum*, but not a Word of St. *Peter*. When he call'd together the unconverted *Jews*, they told him, that *Christianity*, was a Religion every where *spoken against*. what then had St. *Peter*, the particular Apostle of the Circumcision, been a doing at *Rome* all this while? Or, with what sincerity could the *Jews* tell St. *Paul*, that the Christian Religion was a Sect every where *spoken against*, if St. *Peter* had Preach'd the Gospel at *Rome*, at any time before? And why do they desire St. *Paul's* Opinion of it; and for this Purpose appoint him a Day, to come to his Lodgings? Now the Evangelist tells us, that the Result of this Meeting was, — *Some of the Jews believed and some believed not.*

Acts,

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Acts 28. And why is this recorded, but to shew, that no other Apostle had Preached to the Jews, much less to the Gentiles at *Rome*, before St. *Paul*; or that their Christianity was owing chiefly to his Labours; since it is so expressly noted in the same Chapter, that upon some of the Jews rejecting to receive the Gospel at his Mouth, the Apostle declares, that his Commission was to Preach to the Gentiles next, and that they would hear it. *Acts* 28. 28. Upon the whole then, it plainly appears, that when St. *Paul* came the first time to *Rome*, he found but few Christians *there*, and all *those*, of the Jewish Converts. Was this then all the Success of St. *Peter's* 7 Years Preaching *there*? Was this the Apostle, who was to be so successful in *catching* Men, when he had laid aside his Nets and Trade of Fishing? Or cou'd he know his Fellow Disciples Hearts (which he must have done if he told our Saviour that he lov'd him *more than they*) and after all, be so remiss in his Office, as to sit still at *Rome* 7 Years and do nothing? He that can believe this, can *swallow a Camel*. But admitting (after all) that St. *Peter* had been at any time Bishop of *Rome*, as well as St. *Paul*; yet he could only have been Bishop of the Jewish Converts *there*, according to an Agreement between them, that the one should Preach to the Jews and the other to the

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the Gentles. Besides, *Metaphrastes* and his Followers contend, that St. Peter Preach'd the Gospel in *Britain* as well as *Rome*; and *Bellarmin* says, he was 7 Years Bishop of *Antioch*. If then the Supremacy be from St. Peter, the Bishops of *Britain* and *Antioch*, have as much right to it, as Successors of St. Peter, as the Bishop of *Rome*. For St. Peter himself says, God is no respecter of Persons, and how unlikely is it, that St. Peter should prefer *Rome*, which put him to a cruel Death, to other Cities and Nations of the World, where he received better Quarters? For to say the Truth, *Rome* was at this time, the *Scarlet Whore*, which wallow'd in the Blood of Christians, and was the most persecuting City in the World, and so continued for the first Three Hundred Years after Christ; whence all other Cities and Powers of the Empire receiv'd command and Authority to persecute the Christians, wherever they met them.

And can any one in his Wits believe that to be the Mother-Church, who was for destroying *all the Christians* every where, and had no settled *Being* in the World, before the time of *Constantine* the Great, for during the ten great Persecutions, the Christians suffered more from *Rome*, than from any other City or Nation of the World, except the *Jews*; and this I the rather remark, to explode that Opinion, which has caus'd so much hatred

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hatred and bloodshed amongst Christians; I mean the Notion of *Rome's* being the Mother Church; and I dare be confident that the Roman Catholicks who will duly consider these things, will not resent my Endeavours to reconcile them to a better Opinion of Protestants, than they can have, whilst they maintain the Supremacy, and the darling Notion of *Rome's* being the Mother-Church. For if by *Rome's* being the Mother-Church, they mean no more, than the Care which she takes to nourish and breed up those in her Faith, who are born within her Pale and Communion, every National Church is in this Sense a Mother Church as well as the Church of *Rome*.

Now the proper *Idea* that any one can frame to himself of a *Mother*, is, that next to God, she is the immediate Cause of ones Being, and as such, has an undoubted Right both by the Law of God and Nature, to his Obedience *in omnibus licitis*, and it is in this Sense (if I am not mistaken) the Church of *Rome* claims the Title of *Mother-Church*, pretending that all we Christians of these *Western* Parts of the World, receiv'd our Religion immediately from *Rome*. Now both sides agree, that *Christianity* was Planted in this Island, by *Apostolical Men*; whether by *St. Peter* or *St. Paul*, or *Joseph of Aramaea* and his Company, it matters not; but they who always follow the Authority of *Scrip-*

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Scripture, conclude for St. *Paul*; because he says twice in his Epistle to the *Romans*, that he intended to take a Journey into *Spain*, when it is probable he passed over into *Britain*, tho' *Bellarmin* and others will not allow that he ever perform'd that his intended Voyage. But be that how it will, yet allowing Christianity to have been planted here much about this Time, or as early as at *Rome*; Where is the Difference? Suppose the Apostles took *Rome* in their Way hither; what Preheminence or Authority does this give *Rome* over us? But, say they, *Britain* was Converted but in Part, 'till the time of *Austin* the Monk, who brought over the whole Island to the Faith, and he was sent from *Rome*. We answer, neither was *Rome* converted, but in Part, till the time of *Constantine* the Great, who was a *Briton*; and therefore *Rome* is as much oblig'd for her Christianity to *Britain*, as *Britain* is to *Rome*, and where then is the ground of boasting on either side? If this be so, it must then certainly needs be, repugnant to Gods Will, that one Nation should attempt to destroy another, upon the Account of Religion, much more out of Zeal to *Mother-Church*. For admitting, we had receiv'd our Religion directly from *Rome*, how does this prove her to be the Mother-Church? For the true notion of a Mother-Church is, that she her self receiv'd

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the Faith immediately from the Author and Finisher thereof, Christ Jesus. This surely could not be the Church of *Rome*, who receiv'd the Faith from *Jerusalem*, as all other Christians did, and therefore *Jerusalem* must needs be the Mother-Church: For where the first Christians were made, there the first Foundation of a Church was laid, and this too by St. *Peter*; but not at *Rome*, for the Apostles Commission was in propagating the Gospel, to begin at *Jerusalem*, to Preach to the *Jews* first, and then to the *Gentiles*, and when, upon the two first Sermons Preached by St. *Peter*, at *Jerusalem*, 8000 of the *Jews*, were converted, was not this a sufficient Number to make up a *Church*? If then all other Churches were to derive their Being and Beginning from *Jerusalem*, as our Lord testifies, was not *Jerusalem* therefore the Mother-Church? And is not the Church of *Rome* herself her Off-spring as well as we? To what purpose then, is this Notion of Mother-Church so industriously inculcated, but to enflame the Spirits of blind and superstitious Votaries, against all that differ from them? For, though they who ignorantly hold this Opinion, do not actually embrue their Hands in Protestant Blood, for want of Power or Opportunity, to put their Designs in Execution; yet how many Murders (I fear) do they daily commit in their Hearts, and think

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at the same time, that they do God good Service, to do this *Zelo Matris Ecclesiae*, as their Cannon speaks. But I would fain hope, that this is not the avow'd Tenet of the Present Church of *Rome*, and I do hereby declare, and call God to Record, that I had no other Motive to induce me to meddle with these Points, but a Love of the *Roman Catholicks* as well as of the Truth, and to shew them, that they cannot return this Love to us Protestants, or maintain Charity, whilst they maintain these Opinions.

It is the Misfortune of the *other* Dissenters to be of Opinion, that the Errors of the *Roman Catholicks*, have quite unchurch'd them, and destroy'd the Episcopal Succession; which they alledge, as a sufficient Justification of their Separation from the Church of *England*, and therefore that they cannot be justly Taxed with Schism, or a Breach of Unity (which is one of the chiefest Properties of Charity) in so doing. Now this Opinion is as uncharitable as it is *Erroneous*. For,

First, The Bishop of *Rome*, is still a Christian Bishop, and the Church of *Rome* a Christian Church, notwithstanding their Errors; the Seven Churches of the *Proconsular Asia*, were still stil'd, by St. John, the Churches of *Asia*, even then, when they were over-run with Idolatry and Corruption. So the *Jewish-Church*,

though it had been guilty of the grossest Idolatry, is nevertheless, call'd by St. Stephen, the *Church that was in the Wilderness*. So St. Paul; *if any Man be call'd a Brother who is an Idolater, with such a one, no not to eat*, 1 Cor. 5. 11. so that the greatest Corruptions do not *Unchurch*, whilst the Chief *Corner-stone*, or the Foundation, remains firm, though Men build *Hay* and *Stubble* thereupon. To separate therefore from our *Bishops*, under Pretence of Errors, cannot be warranted, unless it can be made appear, that they impose upon us, a *false*, or an *Idolatrous Worship*. The Reason of this is twofold.

First, Because private Persons are not proper Judges of Errors.

Secondly, If private Persons should be allow'd to prescribe Rules to their Superiors, there can be no such thing as Government, and consequently the Peace of the Church must be destroyed. Therefore to maintain *Charity*, Christians must be in Unity with their *Bishops*; because saith, St. *Ignatius*, there can be no Church without them. For the Apostle asserts, that the *Church is built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself*, being the Chief-corner-stone. Now, the *Bishops* being the *Apostles Successors*, remove this Foundation, and you pull down the *Church*; there can be neither *Order nor Decency* without Government, i. e. some

some to Rule and some to Obey; nor Government without subordinate Officers, which are as necessary for Church, as for State. But what Notion of *Subordination* can we frame, if the Ministers of Christ are all equal? Or if who will may take upon him the Office of a Preacher, without Ordination? And how easie is it, for the most Illiterate, or Designing, to intrude into the Ministry, if he has but a good Stock of Assurance, and Self-conceit, and pretend to the inward Call?

As for the *Presbyterians*, there is little, or no difference between their Church Government, and the *Episcopal*, except in their manner of Publick Worship. For as, in the Church of *England*, our Bishops do not Ordain without their *Presbyters*: So neither do the *Presbyterians*, (as I am Inform'd) Ordain without their *Moderator*, or at least without his previous Consent: and if this be true, the *Presbyterians* keep closest, of any of the Separatists, to the Apostolical Pattern: And the Truth is, it is highly Injurious to lay to their Charge, those monstrous *Sects*, that shelter themselves under their Names, whose abominable Opinions they as much detest, as we can do. It must also be confessed, that some of the *Presbyterian* Ministers, in our great and populous Cities, are Men of good Learning, and *Morals*; and no great Enemies, to the Present *Establishment*, wisely considering

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that their present and future *Tranquillity* depends upon the Peace and Safety of the *Church of England*.

To you then beloved Brethren, of the *Presbyterian Perswasion* do I Address my self in the Spirit of Love and Affection: Ye are our Brethren, Members originally of the same Communion, tho' now unhappily departed from us, I hope *but for a Season*.

Amongst other *Grievances*, you Object to us, our Ordination from *Rome*, and urge it as a Plea, to justifie your Separation from us. Please then to consider, that you your selves receive your Ordination the *same way*. For the first Presbyters, who separated from their Bishops, and from whom you derive your Succession, were themselves *Episcopally* Ordained; and therefore if our Ordination be the less *valid*, because it comes from *Rome*, yours must be so too, for the same Reason. You say farther, that *Episcopal Authority* is an *Innovation*, and has no Foundation in *Scripture*, and therefore you set your selves to oppose it, as an *Antichristian Usurpation*; I answer, that you your selves do admit of the *Authority*, though not of the *Name*; for a *Superintendent*, or a *Moderator* and a *Bishop*, are *Synonymous Terms*; without whose *Approbation*, nothing of moment is transacted in your own *Assemblies*. Now your *Agreement* with us in this and most other Points, makes your

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your Separation from us the more inexcusable; for you separate without Cause, and take Offence where *none* is given, which aggravates your Sin. That you are guilty of a wilful or obstinate Schism, I will not be so uncharitable, as to take upon me to say: But thus much you must your selves confess, that Separation from a Church, which imposeth no unlawful Terms of Communion upon you, is Schism, and that Schism is a Sin. You say indeed, that the Terms of our Communion are unlawful, and therefore you separate; but you have not been able to prove your *Charge*; and you are so uncharitable to your selves, as well as to the Church, that you will neither read nor hear her Defence to you, but say, that you are already satisfied in your own Consciences, and differ from us, but in small Matters, which are tolerable. But then you consider not the great Sin of setting up an Authority against the Authority in Being, or a withdrawing your Obedience from *those*, to whom it is due, which you know, was the nature of *Korah's* Rebellion. For this is making up several different Bodies of the Church, or dividing our Lords mystical Body, which St. *Paul* says, is but *One*. It were easie, for a Man of an ordinary Capacity, or Learning to prove the Charge of Schism against you. But this has been done already (I wish I could say) with as much Succes, as,

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with so much Strength of Scripture, Reason, or Argument; that it will never be needful to write any more upon that Subject, but to revise and reprint the Books already Publish'd. Yet since your great Eye-sore is *Episcopacy*, which in your Charity you call a Popish-
Usurpation, give me leave to remind you of St. *Jerom's* Words, upon whose Authority, in this Controversy, you your selves lay so great a Stress. He flourish'd in the Year 380, before Popery crept into the Church. In his Comment on St. *Paul's* Epistle to *Titus*, I find he hath these Words, viz. *Postquam unusquisque eos, quos baptizabat, suos (supple Discipulos) putabat esse, non Christi, toto orbe decretum est, ut unus de Presbyteris Electus superponeretur ceteris, ut Schismatum semina tollerentur*, i. e. When it came to that Pals, that every Man esteem'd those whom he Baptiz'd, as his own Disciples, not Christs, it was Decreed, through out the whole World, that one chosen out of the Presbytery should preside over the rest, that the Seeds of Schism might be destroy'd. Now is not every Bishop with us chosen out of the Presbytery? If St. *Jerom* was in Opinion so far a *Presbyterian* (and he the only Man against all the Fathers) as to imagine, that because *επιοικος* and *πρεσβυτερος*, are sometimes promiscuously used in the same Sense, therefore they were

were not distinct Orders; yet on the other hand, he was so much an Advocate for Episcopacy, as to own, it was a Government that had obtain'd from the Beginning over all the Christian World, and shews, it was necessary to destroy the Seeds of Schism; that neither Unity nor Charity could be preserved in the Church without it, and therefore commands all Christians for Peace sake to submit themselves to it. Now, though St. *Jerom* was not without his Errors, any more than other Men; yet in this he agreed with St. *Paul*, viz. in maintaining, that the Customs of a Church ought to determine our Obedience in Matters not plainly forbidden. For, says he, we have no such *Customs, nor the* Churches of God; plainly implying, that, where such and such Customs had prevailed, every Christian (for Peace sake) ought to comply therewith, provided they were not expressly prohibited by any Divine Law.

Moreover, you say, that Episcopacy is one of the Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*; or if it was not, that the Episcopal Succession is destroy'd by Reason of those Corruptions. I answer, can you call that *Corruption*, which your own Friend, St. *Jerom*, allows to be so necessary an *Institution*? Or will you maintain, that all the Christian Churches in the World are corrupt, or Popish, besides your own *inconsiderable selves*? I call you inconsiderable

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fiderable (not by way of Contempt) but be-
cause, I may safely affirm that ye are not, in
Number, so many, as one to a thousand
Christians, that are against you; *and a thousand*
to one then but you are in the wrong; if not the
present Church *Universal* is, and all Christian
Churches since Christ, have been, all along in an
Error; for you cannot produce any one Church,
in any Part of the World, that was not *Epis-
copal*: Not one constituted Church upon the
Face of the Earth, that was not govern'd by
Bishops, before the *Vandois* in *Piedmont*,
the *Hugonots* in *France*, the *Calvinists* of
Geneva, and the *Presbyterians* transplanted
thence into Holland, Scotland, and England,
within these 200 Years. Now, though Epis-
copacy is no Part of Popish Corruption, as
you Object, so much as *Presbyterianism* is,
(as will appear by and by) yet, for your Satis-
faction, we will leave out all the Popish Coun-
tries, and take in only those Churches, who
disown the Popes Supremacy, and see what
Comparison there is in Number, between
you and them. The vast Empire of *Russia*
alone, is of greater Extent, than *Italy, Spain*,
and that Part of *Germany*, which is Popish,
France, Poland, Hungary, or all Popish
Countries put together: Besides which, we
have on our side, the whole *Greek-Church*;
the *Armenians, Georgians, Mingrelians, Ja-
cobites*, the Christians of *St. Thomas* and
St.

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St. John in the *East-Indies*, and other Eastern Churches in *Africa*, we have the *Copties* in *Egypt*, the great Empire of the *Abysines* in *Ethiopia*. Now all these are *Episcopal* Churches, and never own'd the Supremacy of *Rome*. You see then not only the *Roman* or *Latin* Church, but the whole *Greek* Church also, yea the whole Catholick Church all over the World is, and ever was *Episcopal*. It is very strange then, that a handful of Men lately sprung up, as the *Hugonots* in *France*, and the *Presbyterians* of *England*, *Holland* and *Geneva*, should think themselves wiser than all the World; or that God should suffer all the World in comparison to continue so long in so dangerous an Error. He that can believe this, hath too much Faith, and too much of something worse, I mean Pride and Uncharitableness. And that I may not be thought to do you any Wrong, the Learned *Dupin*, in his History of the Council of *Trent*, tells you where *Presbyterianism* was first hatch'd: And shews it to be a Brat, but of Yesterdays standing, nurs'd up to serve the Ends of Popery. For in the Council of *Trent*, the Pope, by his Emissaries and Favourites, endeavoured, with all his Might, to have the Divine Right of *Episcopacy* declar'd against, that all Bishops might Claim their Power solely from him: But as bad as the Popish Clergy then were, they were not so Corrupt as to suffer this

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this to take Place. Now that noble Historian tells us, that the Pope's Friends made use of the very same Arguments, against Episcopacy, that have been since pick'd up by the *Presbyterians*; but what is most remarkable, when the Pope, could not carry his Cause against Episcopacy, in the Council of *Trent*,* he found another Project, which did his Work as effectually, that is, he set up a vast Number of *Presbyterian* Priests, call'd, ever since, the *Regulars*, whom he exempted from the Power and *Jurisdiction*, of their proper Bishops, and fram'd them into a *Method* and Discipline of their own, and to be accountable only to Superiors of *his*, or of their own contriving, which is exactly like the *Presbyterian* Model. How sadly then have we been all this while abused and impos'd upon, and made to call *good Evil*, and *Evil good*; to call *Episcopacy* Popery, which is Primitive Christianity, and to call *Presbyterianism* Primitive *Simplicity*, which appears to be the Off-spring of Popery. In vain do you alledge the Authority and Example of *Calvin* and *Beza*; for these two Learned Men were both against you; and they have declar'd, and their Followers, the Professors of *Geneva*, within our own Memory, that the English *Presbyterians*, cast an unjust Reproach upon them,

* Vide an ingenious Treatise entitled a Discourse shewing who are qualified to Administer Baptism, &c.

when

when they give out in their Writings to their Followers, that they condemned Episcopacy. I could here insert the Professors of *Geneva's Letter*, to the University of *Oxford*, wherein they justifie themselves from this Calumny, and congratulate the Church of *England's* happiness in having Episcopacy, which their own unhappy Circumstances could not admit of: In that and other Letters to the Bishop of *London* they pray heartily to God to preserve Episcopacy amongst us; they bewail their own Misfortunes, that they had no Bishops, nor could have any for want of a Magistrate to protect them; and conclude, wishing the Continuance of this Blessing to the Church of *England*, for ever. Now, why do you reproach the Memory of *Calvin* and *Beza*, to impose upon the Ignorance of your credulous Followers, when *Beza* expresly says, *Si qui sunt autem (quod sane mihi non facile persuaderis) qui omnem Episcoporum ordinem rejiciant, absit, ut quisquam satis sane mentis furoribus illorum assentiatur*, i.e. Now if there are any (which you shall hardly persuade me to believe) who totally reject the whole Order of Bishops, God forbid, that any Man in his Wits should assent to their *Madness*. Think not, therefore, Brethren, your Separation from your Bishops, to be nothing, because you have been taught, with your Nurses Milk, to have the utmost

Abhorrence

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abhorrence to the very Name of a Bishop; though you cannot tell why; but rather consider seriously, and lament the Misfortune of your Education, which should make you such Strangers, to all the rest of the Christian World, but to your selves in a small corner of it, and to all the former Ages of Christianity.*

To conclude this long Preface: If our Dissenting Brethren, do heartily wish for a happy Union with the Church of *England*; if you sincerely desire to approve your selves, truly Peaceable and Charitable Christians, first learn to forbear railing and enflaming the Spirits of your several Auditories against your Brethren. Employ your Time, Money and Talents to better Purposes, than in lampooning, or hiringaultry Scribblers of scared Consciences to rake up all the Filth and Dirt to throw at us, that they can; and let the Clergy, and all other Church - men beware of imitating such shameful Practices; and *both*, of making one another the Diversion of Fools and Atheists. Let us be content with the Liberty which our Governors have allowed us; let us consider what Misery we should pull down on our Heads, if our Animosities should prove the unhappy

* Vid. Dis. ubi supra.

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Cause of Ruin to our present Establishment, and the Destruction that must follow us all; as woful Experience hath taught our Dissenting Brethren, in the dismal Overthrow of this Church, in the late Civil Wars. Remember, Brethren, that every one of you then, cried aloud for a Reformation, as I fear too many of you do still) and when by popular Tumults, and pretended *Grievances, Petitions, Remonstrances, and other Engines*, the Spirit of the Nation was wrought up into such a Ferment, as ended in the down fall of Church and Monarchy, then was the time to expect such a blessed *Reformation*. But you know too well the Issue, when those uneasy Reformers, had destroy'd the Constitution, they could not agree among themselves afterwards upon a *better*: They mended and changed, they added and altered again and again, 'till at last they were forc'd to acknowledge, that they had brought about a Deformation of Religion, instead of a Reformation of it. Which brings to mind a no less famous, than well known Story of *Apelles* his Picture. He, whether to try, or deride, the Skill or Folly of the Multitude, exposes to their Publick view, a Master-Piece of his drawing, which he had no sooner done, but one found fault, with the Nose, another with the Eye, and a third with the Lip and so on, every one as his Humour led him; which

Apelles

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Apelles perceiving, altered every Part as fast as they found fault, till in conclusion, he had quite spoil'd his Picture, and made it one of the ugliest Pieces that ever was beheld. But *Apelles*, to do himself Justice, as well as to expose the Censoriousness of the Ignorant and inconstant Multitude, produc'd another Picture of the same make, and Beauty, (which he had hitherto kept private, and had escap'd the Judgment of the Populace,) and hang'd it up in Publick, close by the other, with this Inscription at the Bottom; *Hanc ego feci, istam populus.* I leave you, Brethren, to make the Application. It is an easy thing to find Fault with This and That; or to say such and such a thing might have been better done or contrived, but not so easie a matter to find a better in its stead; and indeed, it is morally impossible as Human Nature is constituted, to do any thing so well, as to please every Humerist; and therefore if you should be able at any time, (which God forbid) to destroy the Frame of our Constitution, (which I hope, is not your Intention or Desire to do,) yet then, it will be impossible for you to agree upon any other, to please all the rest of the Sectaries, that differ from you. Upon this account, it is safer both for your selves and for them, and for us all, to be content with our present Establishment.

You

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You know too well to be told how liberal the *Libertines* of our Age, are in their *Invectives* against all the *Ministers* of Religion, of what Denomination soever; with what Industry they endeavour to divide us, and to widen our Breaches? Sometimes indeed, they pretend to take to a Party, and to espouse the Cause of *this* or *that* particular *Sect*: But it is, that they may wound *Christianity* the deeper, under the Mask of Religion. How much then does it concern all *Ministers*, to unite against the Common Enemy? For all this spite is not so much against you, or us, as against our Function and Religion. Now, we all profess our selves to be the Servants of the same *Lord*, and *Ministers* of the same *Gospel*, and shall we be divided in our Affections? We, *who are hated of all Men*, for his Name's sake, shall we persecute and hate one another? What a pleasant Spectacle, yea, what Apology for Atheism and Prophanes, doth it afford, to behold the *Ministers* of Christ's Religion, mounting the *Stage*, as so many *Gladiators*, to wound and murder one another's Reputation, for the Diversion of the *Scorner*, and the scum of the People? That *Man* therefore who can find in his Heart, either by Word or Writing, to vilifie and ridicule his *Fellow-Labourer*, is false to his Saviour and to his Trust, and seeks not *the glory of him that sent him*, but his own private Interest, and the *Satisfaction* of

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his Lust and Ambition. Such a one is in *the gall of Bitterness*, he is *blind*, and *knows nothing*. For, he, whose Heart is *thus lifted up above his Brethren*, where is his Charity to his Master? where is his love to our common Christianity? And this I thought the more necessary and proper to mention *here*, because the *Pride*, and *Envy*, the *Emulation*, and *Contention* between Ecclesiasticks, or Spiritual Persons in the Church of *Corinth*, gave an occasion to St. *Paul's Description of Charity*, which is the Subject Matter of this *Treatise*. They therefore, who will approve themselves *faithful Stewards of the Mysteries of Christ*, must unfeignedly Love and Pray for one another; they must heartily wish, and pray, that the *Work of the Lord may prosper in their respective Hands*: They must not look upon one another as Common Enemies, who have different Views, or Interests to pursue; but as Brethren *Partakers of the same Heavenly Calling*, and *Co-workers* together for the good of Souls: Must rejoice in one another's Happiness, and Successes, Graces, and Abilities; and wish that among the Ministers of Christ Jesus, they themselves were the *meant*. Now this I say, is the Duty of all those one towards another, who are lawfully called of God, to be his *Ministers*, as was *Aaron*: This is to have true Christian Charity, this, to be the Disciples of our Blessed Saviour; and this **Unity**

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Unity in *Affection*, is the way to bring us all into an Unity of *Opinion*.

And now, beloved Brethren of the *Laity*, give me leave to bespeak *your Charity*, especially of those amongst you who are so apt to quarrel with your Religion, or so quick at spying Faults in your Ministers. When you think your selves disengaged, you presently meditate Revenge, and will not stick to lay to their Charge, the most scandalous things that your Malice or Spleen can invent: And consider not what dishonour you reflect upon your Religion by these Practices, or that you wound your Saviour himself, through the sides of his Ministers. Consider they are but Men, and but too like your selves perhaps in those very things that you most dislike them for. You, say, they are Covetous, Lovers of Luxury, Ease and Pleasure. But, I beseech you consider who are most Covetous; You, who make no Conscience of defrauding or over-reaching your Ministers, --- or your Ministers who only seek to enjoy their own? And why will you charge them with ease and Luxury, when, if they be studious and reserv'd, you despise them as much (you say) for their Pride and Singularity? Or why should not your Charity rather incline you to put the best Constructions whether upon their *Familiarity*, or *Retirement*: and that as the *one* proceeds from a desire of promoting Peace

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and preserving a good Understanding between you and your Minister, that his Doctrine may be the better relish'd; so his studiousness is the Effect rather of his Piety and for the avoiding of Scandal, than of any morose Humour, or sinister Affectation. Search then, Brethren, and examine your own Hearts, and *there* see whether your Contempt of your Ministers, does not rather proceed from your Love of this World, or of your Lusts, because *you hate to be reformed*, or cannot bear to be disturbed in the Possession of your ill gotten Wealth, or in the Enjoyment of your unlawful and sinful Pleasures.

The Apostles themselves, though endow'd with supernatural Grace, were not without their particular Failings; and but twelve in Number, and yet one of them was a Devil: Can you then wonder, there should be any irregular Ministers, in so great a Body? Or think it no injustice to lay to all the Clergy, the Faults of a few of them? Now, considering that the Ministers of Religion are of the same Nature with your selves, why should you not rather wonder, that they are not a great deal worse than they are? Or that the vicious part of them are not much more numerous, considering the many Temptations and snares laid every Day in their way?

A great many of you pry into their infirmities, and watch their Conduct and Behaviour;

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our; not out of Zeal for Gods honour, or Religion; but to get a Reserve of Accusations against a Rainy Day, presuming, that they will be then afraid to prosecute you for your *Fraud* and *Injustice*, when you have so many Articles to exhibit against them. But, these Artifices will fail you, when your Hypocrify shall be unmask'd and detected, and no People shall be expos'd to more Shame and contempt, than your selves, when God comes to make the discovery. In the Mean Time, learn from the Example of the great *Constantine*, the first Christian Emperor, to have more Charity for your Ministers, who declar'd to have had so great a Veneration for their *Order*, and so great a Concern for their good Name and Reputation, that if he should see any one of them in the Commission of the most Scandalous Sin, he wou'd sooner cover his *shame* with his own *Purple* or *Imperial Robes*, than to expose him to Contempt and Ridicule. But, if your Teachers are good, and honest, and religious for the generality; if like *Moses* and *Joshua*, they can appeal to your Consciences, and say, whose *Ox* or *Ass* have we taken; Whom have we at any Time wilfully defrauded or over-reach'd? Then testify against them, this Day and hereafter; but neither disdain, nor despise, nor reproach them for their involuntary Failings or Mistakes. *Humanum est Errare.* And where

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is that Saint, or who is that Man that can say,
I am clean and free from Sin?

Lastly, Consider that your Ministers Excess of Charity is but too frequently the Cause of his Fall; he thinks you have no evil Design upon him, when perhaps, like wicked *Ham*, you are endeavouring to rob him of his Innocency, that you may uncover his Nakedness and then accuse him of Folly and excess. Your wicked Intentions his *Charity* will not suffer him to suspect, and when unwarily he happens thus to Stumble over those Blocks which ye yourselves have laid in his Way, What Voluptuousness is here, what rich Game do you make! How Triumphant-ly do you set up our Banners for *Tokens of Victory*, as if you had gain'd the most invaluable Treasure, or conquer'd the greatest Enemy you had in the World? Now is this your grateful return for all their *Works and Labour of Love* amongst you? Is this your Way of *Obeying them who have the Rule over you and admonish you?* Is this the Method of *esteeming them highly in Love*, for their Works sake? A Work as it is the most honourable of all others, so is it the most Beneficial in its Effects. For what Work can be so acceptable to God, or so advantageous to the World, as the Reforming Men's Manners, reclaiming them from their vicious Courses; Teaching

Teaching them how to behave themselves towards God and one another in their several Stations of Life: Instructing them in the Knowledge and Fear of God; in the great Duties of Justice and Charity, Peace and Unity, without which the World would not be a safe Place of Habitation for us; and is all this nothing? Is it nothing to put Men in the way to be happy in this World, and in the next; and to preserve Mens Bodies and Souls from present Misery, and future Damnation? And yet all this and a great deal more, is owing to the Labours and Watchfulness of the Parochial-Clergy, and Ministers of Religion, if we had room to enlarge upon this *Head*.

But it is Time now, to make some Apology (as is usual) for the Defects and Imperfection of a Discourse, which I fear will not be very acceptable to those of contrary Perswasions: or to those who like nothing, but the Product of their own Conceptions. And all that I say for my self is, that I cannot be more contemptible, in any Man's Opinion, than I am in my own; that I have wrote the Truth according to the best of my Understanding, without the least Design of offending those who differ from me; whom I have treated with all the Tenderness and Charity that one Christian ought to shew towards another. It were a piece of Vanity in an Age of so nice a Taste, and so little Charity, to expect to rescue a Discourse from

Slander which hath nothing to recommend it, but Honesty and plain Dealing: For I lay no claim to Infallibility or Perfection, Learning or Eloquence. And I'm well assur'd, that if I were never so compleat a Writer, and wou'd seek to please every Humourist, I should sooner lose my Friends, than convince my Adversaries.





CHARITY,
THE ONLY
Certain Infallible NOTE
O F A
TRUE CHURCH.

C H A P. I.

The Scripture-Notion of Charity. Alms-giving no where in Scripture call'd by the Name of Charity, and why.



T. Paul in his Description of Charity, supposeth, that a Man may be an Orthodox Christian, or a true Believer, and have Courage and Resolution enough to die for the *Faith*, and yet, finally Perish, for want of Charity; therefore *An Agreement in Doctrine with the Primitive-Church*, is no Certain Infallible Note of a True Church. The same Apostle also tells us, of those who work Righteousness,

ness, and lead Moral Lives under the Law of Nature. *Rom. 2. 14.* And therefore, neither can *Sanctity of Life*, be any certain Note of a True Church. These Notes then, are only some of those Properties or Branches of Charity, whereby it is known as a Tree is by its *Fruits*. Charity is a Chain, or a Complication of all Christian Virtues ; and in the Scripture Notion thereof, *Principally* signifies an ardent Love of God, and of one another for his sake. In short, Charity is every thing that is good and lovely and praise-worthy, as appears from *1 Cor. 13.* which, for the sake of Vulgar Understandings, I beg leave to explain.

Charity saith the Apostle, suffereth long, and is *Kind*; Charity *Envieth not*, Charity *vaunteth not it self*, is not puffed up ; i. e. *Charity* will cause us to bear with one another's Errors, or Infirmitiess, and will not suffer us to fly out into Passion, Rage, or Revenge ; but on the contrary, Charity inclines us to be Kind, and Courteous to all Persons, how distant soever in Opinions and Tempers from us. Charity *Envieth not*, i. e. the *Gifts* or *Abilities* ; the *Means*, or *Preferment* of others. But on the contrary, Charity *vaunteth not it self*, is not puffed up ; i. e. it will not permit us, to despise others, and over value our selves, nor to be infatuated with a Conceit of greater Illumination or Knowledge

Knowledge, which makes us presume so much upon our own Infallibility ; but rather to mistrust our own Reasoning, and Merits ; and to think, that other Christians may be as wise, or better than our selves, 1 Cor. 13. 3 4. Hence Charity is said not to *behave it self unseemly*, i. e. towards our Brethren or fellow-Christians ; or suffer us to look upon Men of meaner Circumstances, or Capacities, with Disdain or Contempt : Or to think it below us, to stoop to the meanest Offices, for the promoting their Welfare and Happiness : But on the contrary, *Charity seeketh not her own*, i. e. it seeks the Interest and Credit, the well Being, and Prosperity, of other Persons, as well as of our selves, and upon this Account, the Apostle says, that *Charity is not easily provoked* ; *thinketh no Evil* i. e; the Charitable Man is not soon provok'd by any ill Usage, to return the Injury, and to hurt his Brother ; but rather thinks, that his Trespasses, or Errors, may be the Effects of Surprize and *Ignorance* than of Malice or Obstinacy. Hence, the Apostle also infers, that *Charity rejoiceth not in Iniquity*, v. 6. that is, he who has true *Charity* for his Brother, does not take any secret Pleasure in hearing or telling any Evil done to, or by him ; much less to make it his Business or Practice to hunt after any evil Stories, to blast his Reputation in the World : But on the contrary, *Charity rejoiceth in the Truth*,

Truth, i. e. it rejoiceth to see all Men doing that which is *Lawful* and *Right*, and living up to the Laws of the Gospel, and promoting the Peace and Happiness of one another, in their several Stations and Capacities. *Charity*, continues the Apostle, *beareth all things; believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things*, i. e. *Charity* enables us to pass by, or put up the Provocations we meet with, or the Injuries we receive from others, and inclines us (for the Love of Christ Jesus) to Mercy and Forbearance, and to forgive one another our Trespasses, though never so many, or so grievous to bear. *Charity believeth all things*, i. e. it inclines us always to believe the best, and to suspect no evil Designs, when we have no sufficient grounds to the contrary, but rather makes us averse to hear, or to report any malicious Stories of our Brethren: *Charity hopeth all things*, i. e. all the best of Mens Actions, or Intentions: Or that their Errors or Sins, are not the Effects of their Choice, or Presumption; or if they be, to hope, that God will in his own time, soften and melt their Hearts, and give them the Grace of Repentance and Amendment. *Charity endureth all things*; that is,

First, As it signifies an Ardent or Intense Love of God, *Charity* enables us to endure the greatest Hardships, Distresses, or Persecutions,

tions, for his Religion's sake, that he thinks fit at any time to call us to. And

Secondly, As it Imports the Love of one another; *Charity* Inspires us with Meekness, and Forbearance, enables us to tolerate erroneous Persons, or to endure all Wrongs and Injuries with the greatest freedom, from Anger or Revenge; or with that Christian Temper and Prudence, as are consistent with our own Safety, or our Brethren's Happiness.

Now, the last and the greatest Property of *Charity*, is, that *it never faileth*, i. e. when our *Faith* and *Hope* shall end with this mortal Life, *Charity*, or our Love of God, and of one another will follow us to Heaven, and never leave us to all Eternity. As for all other spiritual Gifts or Christian Virtues, such as Tongues, Prophecies, Miracles; Confession of Sin, Fasting, Prayer, Alms-giving, &c. they shall all cease, or vanish away with this Life. Yea *Faith* and *Hope* too, the other *Theological Graces*: And the Reason is plain because when we come to Heaven, we shall have no need of our *Faith*, because we shall then enjoy the End of it. There we shall see him, and enjoy his Promises, which now we believe only *afar off*, or as the Apostle speaks here, through a *Glass darkly*. We shall have no need of our *Hope*, because we shall then enjoy the Object; for that which we are in Possession of, *why do we yet hope for*.

for. We shall have no need to pray for Forgiveness of Sins; the Remission whereof must first be obtain'd before our Admission into Heaven. We shall have no need to pray for Grace to overcome our Sin, because we shall never after be subject to it; nor in short, for the Practice of any Christian Duties, but this, of Charity, which is to be the chief Ingredient of, or rather the sole Foundation of our future Happiness. For in Heaven, we shall have nothing else to do, but to admire and to love; nothing but to love and praise the Greatness and Goodness of our Saviour, and to rejoice in one another's Joy and Happiness. Nothing more to do but to love God and one another, and with united Voices and Affections to *magnifie* his Name for ever.

Now, from this Description of *its Properties*, it plainly appears, that *Charity* in the most Christian Sense, or Scripture Notion *thereof*, signifies a mild, forgiving, peaceable Temper of Mind; or such a Disposition of Soul, as is free from all those turbulent Passions, such as Hatred, Envy, Malice, or Revenge.---- It Imports a Mind full of Love and good will to all Mankind, but more especially, a Charitable Opinion, and merciful Treatment of Erroneous Christians, Professors of the same Faith, and Disciples of the same Saviour. *Charity* in this exalted Sense, is that which our Lord calls his *New Commandment*;

mandment ; and his Apostle, the *Royal Law*, to distinguish Christians from all the rest of the World, or Believers in *Jesus* from *Jews* and *Mahometans*. For, hereby saith its Author, shall all Men know, that *ye are my Disciples, if ye love one another.*

But are not the Disciples of *Moses* and *Mahomet*, and other Lawgivers taught to love one another, as well as Christians ? And how then can this be a *new Commandment* ? I answer, that *Jews* and *Mahometans* are not taught *it* in the same Degree or Perfection that we Christians are. For we are bound not only to be Patient, and long Suffering towards all Men, but also to forgive, and to pray for the forgiveness even of our Persecutors. We must neither compel Men to embrace our Religion, by force ; much less, hate and persecute, damn and destroy one another, under the Notion of Schismaticks, or Hereticks. Now, that he, who has true and fervent Charity, or he who entertains no uncharitable Thoughts or Suspicions of other Mens Opinions or Failings (if he has the other Properties of Charity) is only a true Christian, St. *John* testifies : Hereby, saith he, know we, that we are in him, and he in us, *because he hath given us of his Spirit*, 1 *John* 4. 12. what the Apostle Means, by the *Spirit of God*, may be gathered from the preceding Verse, where to love one another, is said to be the Cause of Gods dwelling

ling in us, by his Spirit of Love; and God's Love *is said to be perfected* in us, by our loving one another. That is, as St. John further explains himself, *v. 17.* such a gracious disposition of Soul is most exactly agreeable to our Saviours New Commandment, and to his Divine Nature, he having first loved us, and still continuing this his *Philanthropy*, when there is nothing in us to deserve his Love. Now the great freedom of our Lords Love and Forbearance towards us, is the *Principal Motive* which the Holy Ghost makes use of, to persuade us to the Practice of the same Love and forbearance towards one another. For, if whilst *we were Enemies* to him, both by Opinion and Practice, *Christ died for us*, we ought also, saith the Apostle, to *receive one another, as he hath received us to the Glory of the Father*, Rom. 15. 7.

The Sum of all in short, is this: A Church is a Body of Christians; a Company, or a Congregation of the *Faithful*. But Believers and true Believers are two distinct Ideas of a Church; and hence we call it, the *visible*, or Invisible Church. Now all Christians throughout the World who are Baptiz'd into the Holy Trinity, make up the visible Church, and is so call'd, from all those outward, visible Signs, or Actions, such as the Publick Administration of the Sacraments, the Preaching of the Word, and the like. Now of a Church understood

derstood in this Sense, there are as many Notes as there are *Articles* of Faith, and Religious *Ordinances*: And yet St. *Paul* doth in Effect, declare, that a Church with all these Notes, may be a Corrupt Church, for want of Charity. For *this*, faith he, renders *all our Faith, all our Knowledge, and all our Good Works as nothing worth.* 1 Cor. 13. 2, 3, 4. Hence then, it must unavoidably follow, that *Charity, is the only Certain, Infallible Note of a True Church.* The Case in short is this. Charity, as it is a Compound of all the most acceptable Parts of Religion, doth presuppose a Religious disposition of Soul ready to believe and to do what God requires in his Holy Word: When therefore Piety towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jesus, are join'd with the Love of one another, and Forbearance towards our weak, erroneous, or offending Brethren, then Charity, in this complicated Sense, makes us compleat Christians, and true Disciples of the Blessed Jesus; and consequently must needs be a *Certain, Infallible Note of a True Church.*

Having thus I hope made good the Title Page, and explain'd the Scripture Notion of Charity, I proceed to shew, how the Love of God and of our Brethren, come both to be comprehended under this Title, as they are every where throughout the New Testament, where the Word is expressed. Now the Reason is, because the Love of God is the Foundation of our Love to and Forbearance

of one another. There must be a Religious Intention in all Acts of Beneficence and Mercy, to render them acceptable to God, or to give them the Title of Christian or Charitable. Hence it is, that the Love of our Brother, which is the *Effect*, comes to be call'd by the Name of *Charity*, because it should proceed from the Love of God, which is the *Cause*. This, in short, was the Reason, why the Apostles in all their Epistles made Use of the Word *ἀγάπη* to signify both the Cause and the Effect, and therefore our Translators have render'd it, sometimes *Love* and sometimes *Charity*, but no where to signify *Alms-giving*, the common Sense, which the Word *Charity* now bears.

Now as one Error seldom comes alone, but begets more; and it being said of *Charity*, *that it never faileth, that it covers a Multitude of Sins*; and *Charity* here and elsewhere in the New Testament being taken for *Alms-giving*, this Mistake hath produc'd another, more fatal to the Welfare of Men's Souls, *viz.* To believe that *Alms-giving* is therefore meritorious. Hence Men of the most profligate Lives, of the fiercest and most unnatural Tempers, are made to believe (I know not how) that if they give away a great deal, or most of their Substance in Alms, they shall be sure to go to Heaven, notwithstanding their Debaucheries and Cruelties. and therefore, in order to undeceive Ignorant and unthinking People, I will endeavour to give here

here the true Sense of every particular Text in the New Testament, where the Word Charity occurs.

The most remarkable is that of St. James; *Charity covereth a Multitude of Sins.*

That Charity here signifies not Alms-giving, appears partly from these immediate preceding Words) but above all thing have fervent Charity among your selves,) and partly from the subsequent Verse; for the Adjective *ἐκπενίς* frequent in the former part of the Verse, is no where in Scripture, that I can find, join'd to *ἀλεημοσύνη*, Alms-giving, as it is here to *ἀγάπη*, Charity, and therefore it is most reasonable to conclude, that the Apostle in these Words enjoins Christians to have fervent Love among themselves; that is, a Love that is unfeigned, sincere and constant: For this Sense the Word *ἐκπενίς* bears elsewhere, as appears from *Acts* xii 5. where it is said of St. Peter in Prison, that *περιστάχθη* *ἐκπενίη*; *καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν* i. e. fervent, constant, or continual Prayers were made by the Church for his Safety and Deliverance. So to Pray *ἐκπενίως*, is, to Pray with Vehemency and Earnestness. 22. 44.

If it be objected that *ἐκπενίς* may be render'd continual or universal as well as frequent; and therefore that the Apostle's Meaning might be, Give Alms continually, or be always ready to bestow your Charity, as Occasion shall require; I answer, that *ἐκπενίς* cannot admit of this Sense here, because the Poor have it

not in their Power to give Alms; much less to give Alms always; but the Poor may, and are therefore requir'd to Pray always, and to Love continually, and yet the Apostle here enjoins both Rich and Poor indiscriminately, to have fervent Charity among themselves, or to love one another in Sincerity; and then his Reason is just, and Inference conclusive in these Words; for Charity, or that fervent Love he had been exhorting them to, will *cover a Multitude of Sins*: *i. e.* Charity would reconcile all Differences amongst them, incline them to Patience and Forbearance, and pass by a multitude of Faults and Provocations, here express'd, by a *Multitude of Sins*.

That St. Peter is to be understood in this Sense, appears farther from this Consideration, *viz.* Because in every Verse from the Seventh to the Twelfth of this Chapter inclusively, the Apostle passeth from one Duty to another, and there being a Period at the end of every Verse, it is plain, that of these five Verses, not one have any Coherence with, or Dependance upon any other. Whence I infer, that Alms-giving being more properly included under the Word *Hospitality*, Verse the 9th, cannot be therefore meant by the Word *Charity*, Verse the 8th.

It may be further observed, that had the Apostle by *ἀγάπην* here meant an *Alms*, in all Probability he would have said, have fervent *Charity*, not towards one another, or among

among your Selves, but towards your Poor. He would not have said; *εἰς εἰωτὸς*, but *εἰς πλανῆς*: Besides he would have said, have fervent ἐλεημοσύνης have fervent Alms, not fervent Charity, (and then how strange must have been the Expression) so that in my Opinion, these Words without a forced and unnatural Construction cannot possibly bear the Sense that has been often put upon them, even by the best of our Divines.

Charity where it is recommended in the following Texts bears the very same Sense that it does in the 13th of the 1st Epistle to the *Corinthians*; as in 1 Cor. xiv. 1. 10. in 1 Cor. xvi. 14. *Let all your Things be done with Charity.* i. e. Do every thing with Meekness, Patience, and Peace, and to the Welfare and Edification of one another; bearing with one anothers Errors; weakness in Judgment, or failings in Practice: And the neglecting to do these Things, and the contrary, living in Strife and Debate, Hatred and Animosities, is describ'd to be the Works of the Flesh, and a walking *not according to Charity.* Rom. 14. 15.

Now this Charity being *the Bond of Perfectness*, as the Apostle testifies. He therefore commands us above *all things to put on Charity* Col. iii. 14. The Motive to which Duty he lays down at Verse 11. where he tells us, that since God had made no Distinction now, beween *Jew, or Greek, Circumcision, or Uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian,*

thian, Bond or Free; but had received all equally to the Privileges of the Gospel; therefore, says he, put on as the Elect of God, or Persons thus chosen to be the Members of his Mystical Body, the Church, *Holy and Beloved, Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, humbleness of Mind, Meekness, long-Suffering; Forbearing one another, if any Man have a Quarrel against any other, even as Christ forgave you, so do ye.*

The same Apostle 1. *Thes.* 3. 6. commends the *Theffalonians* for this their Charity, and declares, that he rejoiced over them, because of the good *Tidings he had receiv'd by Timothy, of their Faith and Charity;* and what he means by this Charity, he explains in the following Words, *viz.* Because they had had so good an Opinion of his Zeal and Sincerity, and Love towards them, as to have so kind a Remembrance of him, when absent from them, and because they had desir'd greatly to see him; and that *this, their Respectful and Charitable Behaviour towards him, tho' no more than their Duty, had yet been Matter and Ground of great Comfort to him, in his Afflictions and Distresses.* So 2 *Thes.* 1. 3. he declares, *that he thought himself bound in Duty, to thank God always for them, because of the Increase of their Faith, that the Charity of every one of them had so abounded towards each other.* Where observe, that we are to understand, not only the Love they had for one another, but chiefly the

the prevailing Love of God, which had so Inspir'd and provok'd them to the Practice of the former : For which Cause, as it follows in the next Verse, *He gloried or boasted of them in other Churches, for their Patience and Faith under Persecutions and Tribulations, which they had endured for the Gospel sake, or the Love of Christ, which had so constrained them.* Again, St. Paul, calls Charity, the *End of the Commandment*; that is, either the End or Purport of our Saviours New Commandment to his Followers, *of loving one another*, or the End and Design of the Christian Institution ; because, that under the Gospel State, neither Circumcision nor Uncircumcision, or the being of this or that Persuasion, will avail us any thing without Charity, *out of a pure Heart, and a good Conscience and Faith unfeigned.* Hence the Apostle so often inculcates this Duty upon *Timothy*, *pressing him to continue in Charity*, 1 Tim. 2. 15. *to be an Example of it to others* 1 Tim. 4. 12. *Exhorting him to follow Righteousness and Charity, &c.* 2 Tim. 2. 22. *from his own Example*; and yet we know, the Apostle was so far from being able to give Alms, that he had been oblig'd to labour with his own Hands, for a Subsistance; so incapable of relieving others, that no Man had more Necessities to be relieved then himself.

In his Epistle to *Titus*, the Apostle commands the Aged to *be sober, grave, temperate, sound in the Faith, in Charity, and Patience*

Patience : Where it is Evident, that the being found in *Charity*, is, to have an Affectionate good Will towards all Men ; to have a real and hearty Concern for their Welfare and Happiness, both Temporal and Eternal ; to have a readiness to forgive all Injuries ; and to perform all those Offices of strict Justice, Kindness, and Mercy, which we our selves would expect or desire should be shewed to us. In the Third of *John's Epistle* General *Gaius* his Hospitality is indeed commended, and particularly specified, as an Act of Exemplary Charity. But Hospitality and *Charity* are two different things. *Gaius* was a Rich Man in *Corinth*, a Convert of St. *Paul's* whom he calls his Host, and of the whole Church, Rom. 16. 23. So Hospitable a Man, that he not only receiv'd St. *Paul*, but all other Ministers, and Christian Strangers that came to his House. This is the ground of St. *John's* Commendation of him in his Third Epistle general, Verse 5. Beloved, says he, *thou doſt faithfully, or like a ſincere Convert, or a good Christian, what ſoever thou doſt to the Brethren, who come to Corinth; who have born Witness of thy Charity before the Church, whom if thou bring forward on their Journey, after a Godly Sort, i. e. whom, if thou wilt enable to perform their Journey by thy wonted Liberality, thou ſhalt do well;* I say the Apostle doth here call the Hospitality of *Gaius* by the Name of Love, and not Alms-giving, because *Gaius* himself, as well as St. *Paul*, knew that his Hospitality was but a Duty, and a just Debt, due to God for the light of his Gospel, and

and to his Servants, for the Comfort which he had received by their Ministry. And because he was not to look upon them as Vagrants, who came to beg Alms from Door to Door, but such as, by the good Providence of God, had been sent to Impart to him of their spiritual good Things; therefore his Hospitality, civil Reception, and kind Entertainment of them, is stil'd his *Charity*, which comprehends all that love, Esteem, and Respect, which he had shewed them for their Office sake: For, that the Persons, whom *Gaius* had thus hospitably Entertain'd were Ministers or spiritual Persons, appears, partly from his calling them, emphatically *the Brethren* Verse 5. Whereas he calls *Gaius* himself and the rest of the *Laics* by the Name of *Children*, ver. 4. and partly, ver. 6, 7, 8. where St. *John* commends him for his Charity to the Ministers of Christ, because it was for his Name's sake that they went forth, i. e. that they were sent from *Jerusalem* to Preach the Gospel among the *Gentiles*, taking nothing of them. And to encourage him to continue this his Charity, he tells him ver. 8. we ought *therefore to receive such*, that the Laity, who do not go about to propogate the Gospel, might be fellow Helpers to the Truth, by encouraging and helping those that Preachit.

In 2 Peter 1. 7. We are commanded to add, *To godliness brotherly kindness, to brotherly kindness Charity.* Where again the Word Charity, occurs, which no where signifies Alms-giving: The Apostle's Meaning is, that

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we should not only love those of the same Religion, the same Society, or Nation, for this is no more than brotherly Kindness; but we must shew our Charity to all Men, of what Religion, Opinion or Nation soever they be; for unless we have this unbounded Charity, with what Sincerity can we make Prayers, Supplications and give Thanks for all Men, as we are Commanded? Or, why are we so Commanded, but because God is the Father of us all; and because we are all of the same Passions, Misfortunes and Necessities.

The Apostle *Jude* cautioning the Christians of his Time, against the Lewd and pernicious Doctrines of the *Nicolaitans*, tells them, that these Men were Spots in their Feasts of Charity. Now the end of these Feasts, was, partly to preserve them in the Unity of the Faith: And partly in the Bond of Peace and Love. For which Reason they were called *Agape*, Love-Feasts. And therefore by St. *Jude* styl'd Feasts of Charity, in the same Sense, that the holy Kiss, is call'd by St. *Peter*, the Kiss of Charity (for to these Assemblies or Love Feasts is this Ceremony to be referred) because in the Primitive Church, this Apostolical Injunction was made a Test to prove the Sincerity of their Love to one another. For as the Betraying of our Lord, with the Signal of a Kiss, was an aggravation of *Judas*'s horrid Treason; so the Christians greeting one another with this Ceremony, was not only a virtual Detestation of that vile Treachery, but also

also an Indication of the Sincerity of their Love to one another, profest'd by this Symbol of a Kiss. It is not improbable, but the Primitive Christians thought these Meetings a proper time to make Collections for the Relief of their Poor, especially if these *Agape's*, or loveFeasts, were at any time held upon the Lords Day when the Sacrament of the Lords Supper was always Celebrated. And this might be the Reason, why St. *Paul* both reproves the hard-hearted *Corinthians*, for shutting the Poor out of their love Feasts, because they were not able to Contribute in Proportion to the Rich, towards the Support of them, as also why he enjoyn'd, that Collections should be made for the Poor upon the Lords-day, as he had Ordain'd in the Churches of *Galatia*,

1 Cor. 16. 1.

Lastly, In *Rev.* Chap. 2. ver. 19. the Spirit commends the Charity of *Thyatira*, one of the Seven Churches of the Proconsular *Asia*; but by the very next Word, *diakonia*, which follows, it is apparent, that Charity here also, signifies the prevailing love of God which kept that Church steady in the Profession of the true Faith, under so many Temptations; only she is charg'd with one blemish, which Eclips'd all her former Courage, and Constancy, *viz.* her Communicating occasionally with Idolaters in their Idol-worship, here express'd by the Doctrine of *Jezebel*, who drew the *Israelites* to Idolatry. That Charity here is not put for Alms giving, I say,

say, appears from the following Word, *διαγνωσία*, which should have been render'd, Relieving or Administ'ring to the Necessities of the Poor, this being the genuine Sense of the Word in other parallel Places; as in *Act 11. ver. 29.* where *διαγνωσία*, is the Relief, which the Church of *Antioch*, sent to the poor Christians at *Jerusalem* in the great Dearth which happen'd in the Reign of *Claudius Cæsar*. And when *Barnabas* and *Saul*, (by whom this Relief was sent) had Deposited it into the Hands of the Elders; this is said to be a *πληρισάντες τὴν διαγνωσίαν*, a fulfilling of this their Ministry in the Chapter following Verse 25. or discharging the Trust reposed in them by the Church of *Antioch*.

Now, here, being so many particular Duties, mentioned in the same Verse; and Charity being one of these Duties, and this *διαγνωσία*, or Ministring to the Relief of the Poor, being another. Hence I conclude, that Charity therefore in this Text also bears the same Sense that I have shew'd it to bear every where else, in the New Testament.

To confirm the Sense which I have put upon the Word Charity, in the afore-cited Passages, observe further, that what is distributed for the Relief of the Poor, is every where in Scripture call'd *ἐλεημοσύνη*, an *Alms*, not *ἀγάπη* Charity. Thus *Tobit 7.7.* give *Alms* of thy Goods, and never turn thy Face from any poor Man; and *then the Face of the Lord shall not be turned away from thee*. Thus,

Thus, to render what we give acceptable to God, our Saviour commands us, to take heed, that we do not our *Alms* before Men, that when we give *Alms*, we bestow them in *Secret*, that our Father who seeth in *Secret*, may reward us openly for them.

Mat. 6. 1, 2, 3. so the *Beggar*, who sat at the Gate of the Temple, is said not to have ask'd the *Charity*, but the *Alms* of those that entred into it, Acts 3. 2, 3. 10. of *Cornelius*, it is said, not that he gave much *Charity*, but much *Alms* to the People, *Acts* 10. 2. and this is the very Language of the Angel that appear'd to him, who told him, not that his *Charity*, But his *Alms* were come up for a *Memorial before God*, ver. 31. St. Paul also mentioning, the *diangoria*, or the relief which he and *Barnabas* had brought to the poor Christians at *Jerusalem*, from their Brethren at *Antioch*, calls it not the *Charity*, but the *Alms* which he had brought to his *Nation*.

Acts 24. 17. lastly of a liberal Woman, called *Tabitha*, or *Dorcas*, it is said, not that she was full of *Charity*, but of *Alms-deeds* which she did, *Acts* 9. 36.

Now, the Reason (as I conceive) why our Lord and his Apostles, would not give *Alms* the Title of *Charity*, was chiefly to shew, that the Poor were as much interested in the Duty of *Charity*, as the rich: Which they could not possibly be, if *Alms* and *Charity* be Words of the same signification. But

Secondly,

Secondly, Another Reason was, to signifie, that *Alms* cannot properly deserve the Denomination of *Charity*, unless it proceeds from Christian Principles, or from the Love of God our Saviour, and of our necessitous Neighbours for his sake. The Cries and Calamities of the miserable and afflicted oftentimes move Compassion in, and extort an *Alms*, (so call'd, *quasi ab esse*) even from *Atheists* and *Reprobates*. But *Alms* proceeding only from mere *Sympathy*; or from *Ostentation*, *vain Glory*, or any other *Carnal Motive*, cannot possibly fall under the Notion of *Charity*, because *Charity* is a Complication of all Christian Vertues, which they who either deny Christ, or keep not his Commandments, cannot therefore possibly have. Let us Note further, that *Charity* is by the Apostle, declar'd to be the chiefest of the three *Theological Graces*, whereof whosoever is destitute, cannot be saved; if therefore *Alms*-giving be the same with *Charity* the poor must be excluded out of the Common Salvation, because they cannot give *Alms*; which is certainly the Case of those miserable Poor who are fore'd to go about to ask *it*. But if by *Charity* we mean (as the Scripture does) *Zeal* and *Devotion*, a sincere Love of God and of one another, *Humility* and *Meekness*, *Patience* and *Forbearance*, and every thing that is *Lovely*, *Honest* and *Praise-worthy*; then the Poor are as much concern'd in these *Fruits* and *Properties* of

of Charity, as the rich, for though they cannot give an Alms, yet they can serve God, and love one another, they can give a Cup of cold Water, they can forbear to curse, and learn to pray for the Forgiveness of those who shut their *Bowels of Compassion from them*. They can cease to Slander and to Backbite; to Swear and to Curse, to Lye and to Steal, and in a Word, they can be as harmless and peaceable, as Content and Patient, and in every respect as blameless as any other Christians can or ought to be, and consequently, they may be, in the sight of God, who trieth their Hearts, as Charitable as other Christians; yea, more Charitable than they who give away *all their goods to feed them*; for this, St. Paul supposeth Men may do, and yet want *Charity*, 1 Cor. 13. 4. *Charity* then in the strictest Sense, and Scripture Notion thereof, signifies the *perfection* of Christian Love: A Devout, Zealous, Religious Temper of Mind: A forbearing tender and Compassionate Love, or a love that inclines us to forbear one another: To hope, and to believe the best of, and to do good and to wish well to all Men, but more especially to bear with the Errors and Infirmities, of our weak and mistaken Brethren. Hence, Charity is call'd the *Bond of Perfectness*, the *Bond of Peace* and of all Virtues. A Bond, because it ~~unites~~ all true Christians to one another in *Affection*, though not in Opinion. A Bond, because it is the only Means, which our Saviour hath prescrib'd to preserve

the Peace of his Church; and the only Remedy for the Cure of its Divisions.

For Charity inclining all Christians to hope well, and to believe the best of one another, must, for their own mutual Interest and Safety, engage them in an Enquiry after the *Right way*, in the midst of so many Diversities of Opinions; or, as the Apostle speaks, to *try all Things, and hold fast that which is good*. And Humility being one Property of Charity, and consisting in a mean Opinion of our own Understanding and Merits, will make us *slow to Hear and willing to Learn*, and to examine the Weight of other Mens Arguments, and the Grounds of their Opinions. No Man therefore can have true Charity, and at the same time pretend to infallibility or Perfection, to greater Sanctity or Illumination, than other Christians; because, they who lay claim to such Privileges, to be consistent with themselves, must condemn all other Christians who differ from them; and therefore the Apostle opposeth Charity to these Pretensions; for *Knowledge* (sayth he) *puffeth up, but Charity edifieth.* 1 Cor. viii. 1. Whence it clearly follows, that *that* Church, which has most *Charity*, is the best and purest Church: Which leads me to compare the Charity of the Church of *England*, with the Charity of those Christians amongst us, who dissent from her; which is to be the Subject of the next Chapter.

C H A P. II.

The Charity of the Church of England compar'd with the Charity of the Roman Catholicks, and other Dissenters. Her Charity to Erroneous Persons. Persecution upon the Account of Religion, contrary to the Doctrine and Practice of the Church of England.

 **H**A T all *Dissenters* from the Church of *England*, who are Baptized into the Faith of the Holy-Trinity, and hold the Fundamentals of Christianity, leading a Life suitable to their Belief, and conforming themselves to the Laws of their Superiors, or submitting to the Penalties thereof, in those Cases wherein their Consciences cannot comply, shall undoubtedly be saved, (provided their Errors be not obstinate and malicious) is the Charity and Doctrine of our Church. Hence we maintain the Illegality and Sinfulness of Persecution, or that no Man, or Body of Men whatsoever, should be deprived of

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their Liberties and Lives upon the Account of their Errors ; unless their Opinions be destructive of the Publick Peace and Tranquillity. Our Reason is, because it is impossible to know whether Men be Erroneous in the Convictions of their own Mind, or not : For there are Errors, which Men will not be accountable for, (such as do not affect Magistracy or Governments) or else the greatest Part of the Christian World are in a deplorable Case. Now these are such Opinions, as Men imbibe with their Mother's Milk, or are bred up to from their Cradles, which therefore they cannot prevent, for want of proper means of Instruction. To doom therefore all such to eternal Damnation, who are so unhappy as to be born and bred up in Ignorance, and could not possibly believe otherwise than they do : Or to maintain, that all such Christians, as are not Members of this, or that particular Church or Communion, shall certainly be damned, is not only exceedingly uncharitable to our Brethren, but highly injurious to the Saviour of the World. For this, in Effect, is the same thing as to maintain, that God has been, and is still wanting in Mercy and Goodness to the greatest part of Mankind, in that he has permitted, and still continues to suffer, so many

many Millions of Christians, in every Age, to perish everlastinglly, to whom he hath not, and doth not yet think fit to afford the necessary Means of Salvation. Besides, were it Lawful to extirpate, or destroy erroneous Persons, whether *Hereticks* or *Schismaticks*; yet, unless, (as I said before) they are certainly known to be such, in the Conviction of their own Minds, we cannot justifie any Severity towards them, supposing them Peaceable, Obedient, and Innocent in all other Respects. If it be objected, that *Hereticks* or *Schismaticks* may be as well known now, as they were in St. Paul's time, because he describes a *Heretick* to be one, who is subverted from the true Faith; and therefore commands *Titus*, after the first and second Admonition, to reject him, or cast him out of the Church. I answer, a *Heretick*, known only by the Fruits of his Doctrines, may be proceeded Judicially against, and Excommunicated for his Contempt of the Laws; yea, and be Punish'd also with Death, if he continue to disturb the Peace of the State, contrary to a known Law in force against him. But then, I say, a *Heretick* must be self Condemned, and known to be so, by those who are to pass Sentence upon him, according to St. Paul's Notion of a

Heretick. Now he, who knows the Laws and Doctrines of his Superiors, or the Church, must be self-condemned, if he break through these Laws, and broach new Doctrines, contrary to those already establish'd, and then his Condemnation must be just, because his Destruction is from himself. For God hath laid no necessity upon any Man to publish his private Opinions, to the disturbance of the publick Peace. On the contrary, God commands him if he hath Faith, *i. e.* if he be of this, or that Opinion, contrary to all others, to have it, or to keep it to himself, before God, and not to offend others with it, *Rom. 14. 22.* Now this was the Case of those few *Anabaptists*, and others, who suffer'd in Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign. For they suffer'd not for Conscience sake, but for Preaching Treason and Sedition, and propagating such Opinions as tended to the Subversion of her Government: They suffer'd not for their private Opinions, but for their open avowing and abetting of Doctrines destructive of Civil Government: Or they suffer'd not as *Schismaticks*, (though they were certainly such at the same time) but they suffer'd, in short, as Malefactors, and Rebels: And the truth is, that Princess must have been wanting in Charity to herself,

herself, and to far the greater Number of her Subjects, if she had tamely given up her Crown, or suffer'd herself to be dethron'd, by such Conscientious Conspirators. For suppose they acted (as they pretended) in this Affair, upon a Principle of Conscience; or as Emissaries of any Foreign Prince or Bishop, thought themselves oblig'd in Duty to him, whose Agents they were, to dethrone and Murder their Sovereign; was her Parliament and Ministry oblig'd to be of the same Opinion? Yea, suppose she had actually been an Usurper, who were the most proper Judges of *That*, Private Persons, or the Legislature? And will Men therefore call *that* Persecution, which is the just Reward of Treason? It is amazing to hear Men cry out Persecution against *that* Queen, when all the World knows, no Christian Prince that ever wore a Crown, had more implacable and subtle Enemies to deal with, both at home and abroad, than she had. As for that particular Case of her Sister *Mary*, Queen of *Scots*, who knows not with what reluctance she was at last prevail'd upon to order her Execution. For how was it possible for a frail, weak Woman, to resist the Importunities of the pretended Guardians of her Crown and Life? This indeed, in

my Opinion, was the greatest Blemish of her Reign, and what I will not pretend to Justifie, though there want not those who strenuously argue in Extenuation of that *ugly Sentence*; but to infer from Particulars to Generals, is neither Logick nor Justice: and those Gentlemen, who justifie the Persecuting of *Hereticks*, object Persecution with a very ill Grace to Q. Elizabeth, who was so fair as to give them timely warning to provide for their own Safety, before any of them was hurt, except such as were apprehended in actual Rebellion against her. But instead of quitting her Dominions, or flying to their Foreign Friends for Sanctuary, those Gentlemen thought it more Meritorious to stay, and receive the Crown of Martyrdom, in their Religious Attempts to extirpate the Northern Heresie: Which was certainly a work of Super-errogation, and what God did not require at their Hands, if we may guess aright from our Lord's own Advice to his Apostles. For when they were Commission'd by him to go and Preach the Gospel to all Nations (an Undertaking of greater Importance than the carrying on the Interest and Grandeur of the Bishop of *Rome*) if, instead of being kindly us'd and receiv'd, they were Persecuted in any one City, he commanded them

to flee into another, Matt. 10. 23. Accordingly all the Apostles did, *Acts* 17. 10. Paul and Silas flee by Night from *Theffalonica* to *Berea*, and from *Damascus*, from *Jerusalem*, &c. yea, St. Peter himself, who, when *Claudius* Commanded all the *Jews* to depart from *Rome*, fled, according to *Bellarmin's* Conceit, to *Judea*. The Apostles then never run into Danger, when they could avoid it; but took all that prudent care to preserve their Lives, that was consistent with their Duty, and the Law of self-defence. And if Men will be so desperate and fool-hardy, as to expose themselves to danger when they need not, or rather than they should not gratifie their Ambition or Revenge, what Charity is it to humour them in their Extravagancies; or if we do, what Charity can we expect from those who have so little Charity for themselves?

To suffer therefore as *Busy-Bodies* in other *Mens* matters, is to suffer, saith their own supreme Apostle, not as *Saints* or *Martyrs*, but as *Murderers*, or *Malefactors*, *1 Peter* 4. 15.

The Truth is, Conscience was not at all concern'd in the Case: For the Bishop of *Rome*, and his Agents, found the Sheep of *England* to bear such good Fleeces, that we have no Reason to wonder at their rest-

less endeavours to bring us back to his Obedience, from which they say we had Schismatically withdrawn our selves. But I answer, that in shaking off the *Roman Yoke* at the Reformation, our Bishops did no more than withdraw themselves from an *Usurpation*; or resume an *Ancient, independent Power*, which their *Predecessors*, the *British Bishops*, enjoy'd all along 'till the time of *Austin the Monk*.

In short, supposing the Statute of *Elizabeth* had been an *Illegal*, or a *Persecuting Statute*: Yet it was no *Act of Conformity* to any *Doctrine* of our *Church*. It was not the *Issue* of any *deliberate Decree* of either of our *Universities*; nor (that I know) of the *Church of England*, *Represented* in both *Houses of Convocation*. It was purely an *Act of the Civil Power*, made for its *support and security*, against the *unwearied Attempts* of its *Enemies*: And therefore if they must needs call this *Persecution*, it was a *Persecution rais'd by the State*, and not by the *Church*.

But, on the other Hand, when the *end of a Law* is once obtain'd, the *Rigour* of it, in all *Justice and Prudence*, ought to be suspended. And whilst those *Gentlemen*, (against whom this *Statute* remains,

remains still in force) desire only the same Liberty of Conscience that the other *Dissenters* do, i. e. to discharge the Duties of their Function amongst the *Roman Catholick* Laity, according to the Laws of their Church, without disturbance from the Civil Power, I cannot see what danger it can be to the State to allow them this Freedom, whilst they behave themselves peaceably and quietly under the Government. And I am persuaded, that such a gracious Indulgence, and mild Deportment towards them, would sooner reconcile them to our Church and Government, than any other harsh or severer methods can do. For the generality of the *English Roman Catholicks*, are Gentlemen of Honour and Gratitude; of ancient Families, and fair Estates: Some of them Persons of Quality of the first Rank, very Hospitable, Obliging, and Courteous to all Men: And nothing can operate so effectually upon such generous Natures, as a kind, indulgent, civil, and respectful Behaviour towards them. Now if I should say, that the double Tax-Statute is a Severity, in the Opinion of many, or most of the King's Protestant Subjects, as well as the *Roman Catholicks*, I should not impeach the Wisdom of the present Parliament, or

or of any other. Or that it is any Crime in a private Subject to offer Reasons for the Repeal of a Statute that may hereafter prove prejudicial to the Government, no true Friend of the Government will say. It is certain, that many Statutes have been Repeal'd upon the Motions, and Remonstrances of private Persons; and what advantage it is to continue, or what harm it can be to the Government to Repeal this Statute, I believe no Man can well tell. For the Benefit of it to the Government is little or none; to the Subjects, it has prov'd a great hardship in those *Hundreds*, where *Roman Catholicks* have Sold their Estates, or turn'd Protestants. It is pretended, that the design of this Statute was, to weaken the *Roman Catholicks*, and render them incapable of assisting our Enemies with Money, Arms, &c. but since the *Roman Catholicks* have no Seats in Parliament; since they are so inconsiderable for Number and for Strength; how is it possible they should hurt the Government by any indulgence granted to them? Nay, how unlikely is it that they should attempt to do it, if they were as much indulged as other *Dissenters* are? Besides, all good Casuists deny that we may do Evil, that Good may come of it. To oppress even

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an Enemy is an Evil. To tie an Enemies Hands is indeed Nature's Law, and the Voice of Reason. But Religion forbids us to beggar Men to enrich our selves, or run them in Debt to Pay our own. And though it should be allowed that this Statute is no Species of Persecution, I fear it is remembred as a Grievance. It is objected, that the *Roman Catholicks* deserve such a Resentment of the Government, for their Uneasiness, and Attempts to subvert it. I answer, suppose the *Roman Catholicks* Case our own, would we not be as restless and uneasie under the like Pressures? Would we not be as glad of embracing any fair Opportunity to bring about a Revolution, so much for our Safety and Interest? If it be said, he is no Friend to the Government, who apprehends no danger from *Popery*: I answer, they are no Friends to the Government, or the King's Repose, who teaze him with apprehensions of Danger where there is none. Is it the way to make the Crown sit easy on his Head, to set him against his Subjects, and to make him believe he has fewer Friends, or that his Enemies are more Numerous than they are? And were it really so, this would be a good Reason for the Repeal of the forementioned Statute, in hopes to make

make those, who are our Enemies at present, our Friends for the future: For we may live to see that happy time, when the Land-Tax shall be wholly taken off, (that grievous Yoke, which hath gall'd our stubborn Necks for so many tedious Years) but our favour to the *Roman Catholicks* will then come too late, unless we mean to continue the Tax upon them, when all Protestants are discharged.

Now, supposing the most uncharitable things of them that we can possibly imagine; supposing, I say, that for our kindness, moderation, or charity towards them, they should still continue to hate us without Cause; yet even this Behaviour of theirs towards us will not justify any severity of ours towards them: For we are to remember, that we are reform'd from them; but this Reformation is not compleat, if we do not love our Enemies, and do good to them *that hate us*: And (whether the *Roman Catholicks* will or no) they are the Subjects of *England*, and make the same use of our Laws and Courts of Judicature, with respect to *meum* and *tuum*, that other Protestant Subjects do: Nay, and whilst they maintain the Fundamentals of Religion, they are our Brethren too; and therefore whilst

whilst they live among us, we ought to treat them as such, after the Example of *Joseph*, who own'd and reliev'd his unkind Brethren, though they had been so unnatural to him, as to make an Attempt upon his Life. And if ever we hope to be deliver'd out of the Hands of our Enemies, to serve God without Fear of Persecutions in this World, we must follow his Patience and Charity, whereof *Joseph* was a *Type*.

In short, may we not reasonably presume, that a favourable Treatment of the *English Roman Catholicks* will be one great means of strengthening the Quadruple Alliance: For then we shall make our Foreign Allies our Friends, out of a Principle of Gratitude, who may be such at present only out of Interest. And let those who pretend to have so much at Heart the sufferings of Protestants abroad, consider, whether the way to relieve them, be to oppress the *Roman Catholicks* at Home: Or whether it be not more natural to believe, that the mild and gentle usages wherewith these are treated here in *England*, will not be return'd to Protestants in *Roman Catholick Countries*. For let the present Friendship which *Roman Catholick* Princes profess for us Protestants, be as sincere as we wish, or hope it may be; yet

yet Persons of the same Communion, have naturally more than an ordinary Tenderness and Compassion for one another, especially when aggrieved or oppressed. And we may depend upon it, that the Foreign *Roman Catholicks* do not forget their Brethren in *England*, but will make their case their own, whenever it shall be in their Power to relieve them, without injuring themselves; and therefore Prudence and self-Interest, as well as Religion, must oblige us to shew the same Charity and Kindness towards our *Catholic* Fellow Subjects, that we our selves would expect or desire of them, were we within the Reach of their Power.

If these Reasons will not satisfie the Clamours, or Cavils of those Hot-Headed persecuting Zealots, who look upon all those as *Popishly* affected, who shew any manner of Charity to the *Roman Catholicks*: I enter this Caveat against them all, protesting the Innocency of my Intentions, which is to serve the Government, and if Charity, the Subject under consideration, has unwarily led me to *Maxims* of State, too mysterious and dangerous for Persons of my impolitick Capacities and Profession to dive into; I humbly submit what I have said to the Wisdom of my Governours, beseeching God

God to direct all their Councils for his Glory, the Publick Tranquillity, and the Honour of the Reformation.

On the other side, it is objected, that a great many Republicans suffer'd upon the Restoration, besides those prodigious Rebels who tried and Murdered the Father's. The Truth of which Case is this; King *Charles the II*. required some of the Chiefs of the *Nonconformists* to Renounce their solemn League and Covenant, by which they bound themselves to destroy Root and Branch, *i.e.* to Murder him and all his Family, and utterly abolish Monarchy and Episcopacy: Which they refusing to do, he caus'd them to be apprehended, whereof some impenitently died in Prison, rather than submit to the King's Mercy. And will they call this Persecution; what for a King to tie such of his Rebellious Subjects Hands as had bound themselves with an Oath to cut his Throat? This the Offspring of those Men, cease not to make loud Complaints of, and call a most terrible Persecution, after that their Fore-Fathers had murder'd the Father in cold Blood, banish'd his Heir, and the rest of his Children, to seek their Bread in Foreign Kingdoms, and made such a Havock amongst the Loyal Nobility and Gentry of

of this Kingdom, that some of their posterity feel the fatal effects thereof to this day ; tho' by the good Providence of God, and his Blessing upon their Loyalty, they exceed in Wealth and Honour, those Children of the Rebel-Race, who sensibly dwindle to decay and oblivion every day more and more. This Remark is certainly true in the general, though some Families yet remain in Possession of that Wealth and Riches which their Fore-Fathers Rebellion and Plunder have left behind. But to return ; so far was the Confinement of those few unhappy Miscreants look'd upon as a Persecution by other People, that the whole World stood amaz'd at the Clemency of the Government at the Restoration, wherein so very few suffer'd such mild Punishments, out of such a vast Number of Rebels, who deserv'd severer ; and a general indemnity pass'd upon the rest, who had not afterwards the Grace either to acknowledge the King's Mercy, or their own Sins ; but, on the contrary, continued to justifie, both by Word and Writing, their Iniquities, like a Whore's Forehead, as the Prophet speaks, who *refuseth to be ashamed*. This Ingratitude makes the old saying true, *It is he that doth the Injury we cannot forgive* ; and it is observ'd of

Brutus,

Brutus, who had Murder'd Cæsar, that always after he inveigh'd against him as a Tyrant, *ita enim facto ejus expediebat*, saith the Historian, *i. e.* it was necessary that he should call Cæsar a Tyrant, otherwise he himself must have been a Notorious Traytor. And this is certainly the Case of all those who justifie the King's Murder, which they must either maintain, or be forc'd to acknowledge their Fore-Fathers to have been the worst of Rebels.

In short, whatever the Nonconformists suffer'd, whether justly or not, the Church of England is not chargeable with: For she that was the greatest Sufferer, was the first that forgave, and Preach'd up Charity, and Mildness, and Forbearance, to an injur'd Prince, and People; which had that good effect upon both, that they wish'd their greatest Enemies no more harm than to Repent, and the Grace to live in Peace and Subjection for the future to the Government, which they had so lately overturn'd.

Let us next enquire into the Behaviour and Charity of the *Dissenters*.

If these Men were as scrutinous in searching, or as diligent in examining into their own Lives and Opinions, as they are into those of other Men; if they had that Charity for themselves, which

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they have not for the *Church*, so as to own themselves convinc'd, when they are convinc'd, they would ingenuously acknowledge (what indeed cannot be denied) that no Christians upon Earth (under their Circumstances) are so Charitably dealt with as they are. For though, by their avow'd Principles, they are the profess'd Enemies of the present Establishment, yet they Peaceably enjoy the very same Liberties and Immunities, that the best and the most disinterested Friends to the Goverment do. But it seems, this is not sufficient, they want the Governing part, that is to say, in plain *English*, they want to be entrusted with the Protection of a Government, which they think themselves bound in Conscience to destroy. And since they have not been yet able to prevail with our Governours to yield to them in this Point, they cease not, by Writing and Preaching, to call the *Church of England*, *Popish*, and *Anti-christian*; but still rail on against her Ministers and Altars, in a most uncharitable, prophane, unchristian manner, beyond the Example of former Ages: Which is a Liberty (I will be bold to say) which no Christian Government in the World would allow them, besides our own: and, I may add, a Liberty, which, to

to say no worse of it, is an excess of Charity. For such a Liberty must needs be dangerous to the *Dissenters* themselves: Because whenever the Church is destroyed, they must perish in its Ruins. Such a Liberty, or rather Licentiousness, must be intirely inconsistent with Charity, upon a double Score. 1. Because it is destructive of Natural Religion, or the Law of self-defence. 2. Because it is destructive of Peace and Unity, which are the chief Properties of Charity: For no Man can have true Charity for others, who is not Charitable to himself. Besides, Charity doth oblige us to be thankful to God for our present well-being, or happy Establishment, which (how can we be) if we abuse that Power God hath given us for our own Defence? Or upon what grounds can we expect the Continuance of his Protection, who despise the means of our own Safety? To deprive our Enemies therefore of the Liberty of destroying us, I am sure, is no species of Persecution, but the Law of Right-Reason, and highly consistent with Charity both to our selves, and our Enemies too; and therefore, it very ill becomes the Character of true Churchmen to skreen them from Justice, who daily broach and publish new Doctrines, contrary to those already receiv'd, and establish'd. For besides that this is an

Argument of a great decay of Piety towards God, and Charity towards Erroneous Persons, it favours Rank either of Cowardice or self Interest, of Lukewarmness, or Indifferency to all Religion whatsoever.

It is certainly equitable enough, and most agreeable to Christian Charity, and Moderation, that the several Sectaries be permitted to enjoy a Peaceable and an undisturb'd Liberty of serving God, according to their different Persuasions or Opinions, whilst they behave themselves peaceably and modestly, and forbear their unchristian Raillery and Clamours against the Church: And with such a Toleration they ought in Prudence as well as Charity to rest contented, least the abuse of it, to the Prejudice of an indulgent Government, should at last meet with a Resentment, which so much Ingratitude may reasonably expect. Time was, when the Church of *England* would have gladly compounded with them, for the Tenth of that Indulgence which they now do, and always did enjoy: But to rub old Sores, is to draw on fresh Quarrels; and therefore, for Chariy's sake, I will forbear to make any invidious Comparisons, which may rather serve to let us at greater variance, than reconcile us to each other: And only

only take notice of that, which was the chief Cause or Foundation of the Sufferings and Calamities of this Church, in the great Rebellion, *i. e.* the solemn League and Covenant, by which they who took it, bound their Souls to destroy Root and Branch, *i. e.* the King, his Family, and the Church establish'd, or all Milignants, (as they call'd them) who-ever they were, that had Courage and Loyalty enough to oppose their Proceedings. Now, was not such an impious Combination of Blood-thirsty Men, a sufficient Provocation for the mildest Government in the World, to avenge it self of such hardned Rebels? When wicked Haman had conspired with his *Leaguers* to destroy all the innocent *Jews* within his Master's Dominions, were they at all pitied, when they fell into the Mischiefs which they had prepar'd for others? Or was *Ahasuerus*'s Conduct blamed for this piece of Justice, even upon his own natural Subjects, though it was in Vindication of Strangers?

Suppose then the Church and King at the Restoration had enter'd into such another solemn League and Covenant, to destroy their Enemies Root and Branch, who taught them the Example? Or who could have blamed them

for their Severity? And yet let the several *Dissenters* (notwithstanding their manifold Provocations) produce if they can, any such Leagues or Covenants enter'd into by the Church of *England* to their Destruction; and in the mean time, let them call to mind (if they can bear it) who arm'd the Leaguers in *France* against their King, and never henceforth cry out *Po-
pery* upon the Church of *England*: For be it known unto them, that their solemn League and Covenant was almost Word for Word the same, which the *Roman* Pontifical obliges every Bishop to swear to, at his Consecration; that is, that he shall Root out all *Hereticks*, and all that Favour them, to the utmost of their Power. And that they have not altered their Opinions since, appears but too plain, not only from their present Behaviour towards the Church of *England*, but from the flagrant Example of the Kirk of *Scotland*, who will not allow the same Liberty of Conscience *there*, that their Brethren enjoy in *England*. And when at the Treaty of Union, the *English* Commissioners laboured for an Indulgence to the Episcopal Party in that Kingdom, their Propositions were rejected with Indignation and Scorn, and not without apparent Danger of their Lives. For *them* then to grant any Indulgence to other People, (to use their own

own Language) is to establish *Iniquity* by a *Law*; but to deny this Toleration to themselves, is rank Persecution: So that these *Proteus's* can blow *hot* and *cold* with the same Breath; and if you touch their little Fingers, they are presently at a point, and will be their own Carvers if they can; but if themselves do never so much hurt, let others look to it, and get Satisfaction where they can: And whether this Behaviour be agreeable to that Meekness, Peace, and Moderation, so much cried up, and pretended to by them, or to Christian Charity, or even to the Law of doing as we would be done unto, let God and the World judge between us.

The Mother has not more Charity for the Church of *England* than her Children: That is, the Church of *Rome* and the *Dissenters* agree in this, that no Quarters ought to be allow'd to those whom they suppose to be *Hereticks*. For the former has inserted it in one of her Canons, *Non sunt Homicide, qui adversus Excommunicatos, Zelo Matris Ecclesiæ armantur, i. e. they are no Murderers, who kill Men out of Zeal to Mother Church.* *Bull. Cœnæ decret. part 2.* And the *Roman Breviary* maintains, that all the Kingdoms of the Earth are at the *Pope's* Disposal; and consequently all Men must be destroy'd as Rebels, who do not think

fit to submit to his Authority. The Council of *Lateran* damn'd all *Hereticks* in form, and accordingly every *Maundy-Thursday* they are Religiously cursed, and deliver'd over to the Devil. The *Spanish* Inquisition was set up by the Authority of the *Roman Church*, and design'd for no other end, but for the entire Extirpation of *Hereticks*. In short, the cruel Massacre of the Protestants in *Paris* and *Ireland*, and all the Christian Blood that has been shed for Religion throughout *Europe*, for some hundred Years past, has been owing to that cruel Doctrine, of the Lawfulness of extirpating *Hereticks*, viz. *Zelo Matris Ecclesie*. And I think *Bellamin* himself owns this to be the Doctrine of the Church of *Rome*, in these Remarkable Words (*ubi desunt vires*) as much as to say, if you have not Strength enough to kill *Hereticks*, you may let them alone; which is a wonderful Instance of his great Compassion and Charity towards us. The general Council of *Constance* solemnly Murdered *John Huss* and *Jerom of Prague*, two learned and pious Protestants, for *Heresy*, notwithstanding Publick Security had been given for their Lives, before they would venture to confront their Enemies; and this that wicked Council did, upon this very Principle, *that no Faith was to be kept with Hereticks*. And though

though the *Gun-Powder Treason*, is said to have been only the Conspiracy of a few desperate Jesuits, without any Authority or Consent from *Rome*, yet it appears but too plain, that it was there first hatch'd, and had the *Pope's* Benediction; else why was *Garnet*, the chiefeſt of the Conſpirators, afterwards Canoniz'd and made a Martyr for it? I will forbear to produce any more Instances of this kind, or to describe the various, moſt acute, and unheard of Barbarities committed upon the Bodies of ſo many Thousands of poor innocent *Protestants* in *Ireland*, and other Countries, in cold Blood, in purſuance of this abominable Doctrine; because my design is not to exasperate *Protestants* againſt *Roman Catholicks*; but to ſhew them both, how contrary ſuch cruel Proceedings are to the Spirit of the Gofpel, and to that Charity, which requires all Christians to forbear *one another in Love*. And I could heartily wish, for the credit of Christianity in general, and ſo great a Body of Christians as the Church of *Rome*, in particular, all this was nothing more than meer Calumny, Fiction, or Romance.

It is not enough to ſay, this is only the Opinion of a few private Doctors, unless the Church of *Rome* had thought fit, by ſome ſolemn Act of Council or

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Consistorial Decree, to have openly abjur'd or declar'd her abhorrence of such scandalous and pernicious Doctrines: And until this is done, the charge of Persecution must still remain good against her, though she does not, or cannot, every day put this her bloody Canon in Execution.

It is certain, that the *Roman Catholicks*, in their natural Temper, are as free-hearted, courteous and obliging, as any People in the World. But O the dreadful Effects of this abominable Doctrine, which sowers the best-natur'd Dispositions in the World! It fills Men, the most averse to Anger and Revenge, full of Rage, Wrath, and Enmity; and instead of leaving them as it finds them, naturally peaceable, loving, and charitable, it renders them furious cruel, and implacable to all that differ from them: Whereof we had a notorious Instance in the late Queen *Mary*, who (as all Historians agree) was by Nature as Mild and Merciful a Princess as ever swayed the Scepter, and yet what a Deluge of *Protestant* Blood was spilt within the Compass of her short, yet too long Reign, to the Immortal Reproach of her (otherwise unspotted) Memory.

Wherefore to conclude:

Since the Church of *England* openly Renounces and Detests all such Unchristian and Uncharitable Doctrines and Practices:

Practices: Since she hath never enter'd at any time into any solemn League or Covenant, or call'd for the *Secular Arm* to Avenge her, even of her greatest Adversaries: Since she Condemns all manner of Persecution and Oppression, upon the Account of Conscience and Religion, as Antichristian and unlawful: Since she hath never impiously perverted the Word of God, to countenance or stir up Rebellion; nor Fasted nor Prayed for Success in it: In a Word, since her Enemies still continue to justifie all these things which they have done: But the Church of *England*: on the contrary, commands all her Members, (as they tender their Salvation) by all means to abound in Love, and to shew all *Meekness unto all Men*: What remains then, but that all who dissent from her, and wish well to their Souls, forthwith embrace her Communion, as that Church, which hath most Charity, and consequently is the best, and purest Church.

The great Power and Efficacy of
Alms-giving.

THAT *Almsgiving* is a part of the Law of Nature, the mutual Sympathy of Men towards each other plainly proves; and that the very *Heathens* themselves look'd therefore upon it as a moral Duty, appears from the Example of *Cornelius*. Every Man is naturally kind and helpful to another: And it is from Nature, corrupt or degenerate, that Men are fierce and cruel. The wisest of the Heathen Philosophers taught, *Quod tibi fieri non vis alteri, ne feceris, &c.* or in our Saviour's own Words, *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do unto you, even so do unto them*, which he says, was the Sum and Substance of the *Mosaical* Law. Now the first Precept which we meet with relating to *Alms*, in the Law of *Moses*, is in *Exodus ch. 23. v. 11. &c.* where the Increase of the Seventh Year of a Man's whole Estate is given to the Poor. This Precept is set forth at large in these following Words of *Deut. ch. 15. v. 7. &c.* *If there be among you a Poor Man of any of thy Brethren, within any of thy Gates, in thy Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine Heart, nor shut thine Hand from thy poor Brother: But thou*

shalt

shalt open thine Hand wide unto him, and
shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need,
in that which he wanteth. Beware that
there be not a thought in thy Wicked Heart,
saying, The seventh Year, the Year of Release,
is at Hand, and thine Eye be Evil against
thy poor Brother, and thou givest him nought,
and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it
be Sin unto thee, &c.

These general Commands seem to imply, that the People of the Jews had in a manner all things common amongst them; and that none of them look'd upon any thing so much his own, as that he was not obliged to part with, for his Neighbour's use, if he could spare it from himself. For, besides the seventh Year of Release, (which was to the Poorer sort a kind of a Jubilee Year, because a Year of Plenty and Rejoycing) they were moreover to be relieved at all other times, i. e. when their Necessities requir'd it. And hence it came to pass, that for many Years after their Settlement in Canaan, the Jews had no Poor (strictly speaking) amongst them at all. I mean, they had no Beggars, whilst they observ'd the foregoing Precepts. But their falling off from the true Worship of God, and their Cruelty to one another, by degrees brought Poverty upon them all, as God had threatened.

ned. For the Reason subjoin'd to these general Precepts was, *viz.* *Because for this thing the Lord thy God shall Bless thee in all thy Works, and in all thou puttest thine Hand unto.* And that he might continue his Blessings to them, God told them, *The Poor should never cease out of the Land;* and therefore it was their Interest, as well as Duty, to remember and observe his Charge concerning them.

Now that Almsgiving is a Christian Duty, I need not stand to prove; for our Saviour has made it as necessary a Condition of our Salvation, as any other Duty whatsoever; yea, lays greater stress upon it, than upon our Faith, as appears in the Instance of the young Rich Man, who would not sell his great Possessions, to bestow them upon the Poor. Wherefore our Lord lays it down as an Evangelical Precept of perpetual and indispensable Obligation, *Luke 2. 41. Give Alms of such things as ye have.* So *ch. 12. v. 33. Sell that ye have, and give Alms:* For this he says, *Is the way to secure the true Riches, and to Treasure up for our selves, Treasures in the Heavens.* And therefore to render this Duty the more acceptable to God, in his Sermon on the Mount, he gives us Directions concerning the right Performance thereof. From all

all which, St. James concludes, that he who can, but being moved by a proper Object, will not give *Alms*, hath not the *Love of God* dwelling in him.

Having thus briefly prov'd Alms-giving to be a Moral, and a Christian Duty; that what we bestow, by way of Alms, may properly fall under that Name, we must consider these five Points.

1. Who may be properly said to give Alms.

2. Who are the most proper Objects of our Alms.

3. The most proper Season of bestowing our Alms.

4. The Quantity or Measure. And,

5. Lastly, The Quality of our Alms.

1. Then ~~ἀληστόν~~, an Alms, is so call'd, from that Compassion which we feel within us for the Poor we bestow our Alms upon. And therefore unless what we give, proceeds from this inward Sense of their Wants or Sufferings, we cannot call it an Alms properly; but rather a Gift or Bounty, or such like Name, whereunto we are excited, not by any Natural Sympathy, or the Love of God, but by Importunities, or vain Glory, or any other carnal Motive. So that we must ever remember, that in order to entitle our

our selves to the Promises of God to the Merciful and Charitable, our Alms must proceed from a Principle of Obedience to God's Will, as well as natural Affection to our Brother.

2. We must be sure, that what we give is our own, or what we can spare from our selves and Families; for though my Brother be in want, yet I am not bound to put my self in equal Want to relieve him, much less to famish my self, to satisfie his Hunger. Besides, the Food and Raiment, which I want as much as he, I cannot bestow upon him, without Transgressing the Law of Nature, and being Guilty of the Sin of Ingratitude towards God, who hath thought fit to do so much for me, which he hath not done for my Neighbour; and whose Mercies are as much magnified in my Happiness and Deliverances, as in his.

3. No unjust Persons, or Extortioners, or Thieves, can be properly said to give Alms, though they should give away all their ill-gotten Treasures. For this in Effect is, (as the saying is) to rob Peter to pay Paul; to be cruel and unjust to one Man, to be merciful to another. It is to give what is not our own, and to

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be Bountiful at another Man's expence. Besides, that cannot be said to be given out of Compassion to one Man, which is violently taken away from another. For a truly Charitable Person is equally Compassionate, and makes the same Conscience of dealing justly, and living honestly, as of relieving the Poor. Nay, he knows that justice and upright dealing is one certain way of being liberal; whereas to cheat and over-reach others, is not only the way to increase the Number of the Poor, but to render those incapable of relieving them, who might otherwise be as able, and as well disposed to bestow their Alms upon them as our selves.

But they who are stedfastly resolv'd to *Steal no more*, nor to practise any evil Arts to deceive their Neighbours for the time to come; to testifie the Sincerity of their Repentance, and to be capable of Pardon, must first make Satisfaction to their injur'd Neighbours; and then seek to cut off their iniquities by shewing Mercy to the Poor, according to that Resolution of *Zaccheus*, *Behold, Lord, half of my Goods, I will for the future give to the Poor; and if I have done wrong unto any Man, I will restore him four-fold.* Therefore they who consent with Thieves, or partake with Adulter-

Adulterers, (as the Psalmist speaks) think wickedly that God is such a one as themselves, if they suppose to compound with him at so cheap a Rate, as the bestowing now and then a few Pence on the Poor. No such matter Man, assure thy self; whoever thou art, thou must first learn to be a just, an honest, and a Religious Man, before thou canst be kind, liberal, or charitable.

2. Let us consider who are the most proper Objects of an Alms. The Jews had a saying, *Thou shalt Love thy Neighbour, and hate thine Enemy*, and thence concluded, that they were not oblig'd to shew any Friendship, Mercy, or Charity, to any People but their own: Which was both the Occasion of the Lawyer's Question, *Who is my Neighbour*, and of our Saviour's answer in the Parable of a certain Man who fell among Thieves, &c. whereby our Saviour design'd to let us know, that every Person in Distress (of what Country or Religion soever he be) is to be look'd upon as our Neighbour, and to partake of our Charity. But yet, as God is the Fountain of Love and Mercy, so he is likewise a God of Beauty and Order; and therefore though he requires us to look upon every Man in Trouble and Adver-

sity, as a fit object of our Compassion and Assistance; yet he teacheth us to distinguish between Relations and Strangers, and between our Friends and our Enemies. For since all Men in Distress cannot possibly partake of our Charity, any otherwise than by our Prayers and kind Wishes, therefore our nearest Relations must have the first place in our Affections, whether they be our Spiritual or Carnal Relations. And for this order in our Love, we have several Precepts, as well as Examples, in Holy Writ. *Do good to all*, saith the Apostle, *but especially to those of the Household of Faith*. And according to this Rule, our Saviour honoured his Spiritual Relations before his own natural Kindred. For when one told him, *Behold thy Mother, and thy Brethren, stand without desiring to speak with thee*, he stretched forth his Hand towards his Disciples, and said, *Behold my Mother and my Brethren*, i. e. these I prefer to my other Carnal Relations: For *whosoever shall do the will of my Father, which is in Heaven, the same is my Brother, and Sister, and Mother*.

The same Order is to be observed toward our natural Relations, i. e. our own Families and nearest Kindred must be preferred to our remoter Relations: And these again before

fore our Neighbours : Our Neighbours before Strangers ; and Strangers before Foreigners. To this purpose St. Paul saith, in his Epistle to *Timothy*, 1 Tim. 5.8. *He that provideth not for his own, especially those of his own House, is worse than an Infidel.* An Example of this Order we have in *Joseph*, who preferred *Benjamin*, his Brother both by Father and Mother, before the rest of his unkind Brethren, by his Father only. In the Feast that he made for them all, his Brother *Benjamin*'s Mess was five times as large as any of theirs; and at parting, he gave to every one of his other Brethren only one change of Raiment, and some Money ; but unto his Brother *Benjamin* he gave 300 pieces of Silver, and five Suits of Apparel.

Next to our Relations, the most proper Objects of our Alms, are poor Widows, and Fatherless Children. As for the Widow, the impossibility of Receiving any Comfort or Relief from him who was once the Friend of her Bosom, makes her Case the more pitiable, as her Affliction is one continued burthen of Life, and her Loss not to be thought of, without renewing of her Grief, and increasing of her Sorrow. For which Reason, God, to comfort such disconsolate Creatures, that they might not sink under such a load of Afflictions, de-

clares himself a *Husband to the Widow* ; intimating, that nothing was sufficient to support her under her Calamities without himself : *i. e.* without her Hopes, and Trust, and Affiance in him, who finds out various means of relieving those who depend upon him, which we cannot foresee or think of. For this Reason, poor Widows were always first taken Notice of and reliev'd as the most comfortless and dejected Creatures, who were not able to help themselves ; as appears from St. Paul's Charge to *Timothy*, and God's particular Providence in the Relief of the poor Widow of *Sarepta*, especially if *they were Widows indeed*, *i. e.* such as served God by Prayer, and other good Works. But of all Charities, the most prudent, and best in its Effects, is an Alms bestowed for the Education and Support of poor Fatherless Children ; because it is an immediate Relief to the greatest Objects of Compassion in the World. It is for feeding, and cloathing, and instructing poor innocent distressed Children, who are not capable of helping themselves ; and who, by God's Providence, are left to the wide World, without a Friend or Relation to help them. The advantages of bestowing our Alms for the Education of poor Children, or

' or setting up Charity-Schools, are Numberless, and of the greatest Consequence to the Publick, as well as to poor Orphans themselves: For by this means, we contribute towards the saving of their Souls, as well as their Bodies; and do what lies in us, to root out of our Youth, all the Seeds of Vice and Wickedness, and implant in them the early Habits of Virtue and Goodness. Hereby we teach them to Pray, acquaint them with the Scriptures, and furnish their Memories with such Portions of them, as may be a stock for the future Devotion of their Lives, and enable them to keep up some Communion with God, even in the midst of Work and Business.

'Tis a sad Reproach to our Religion, saith the excellent Bishop of *Armagh*, that in the midst of a Nation where it is profess'd and establish'd, such Multitudes of poor People should be found void either of natural, or reveal'd Religion, and even of the very first Principles of the Oracles of God; scarce having tasted of the Milk of the Word, which is necessary for the Nourishment of Babes in Christ. The ignorance of many among the lower Rank of People, is incredible to any, but such as have sought

for opportunities to try them : Nay, many know no more of Christ, than the Name ; and have as little knowledge of our Salvation by him, as if they had been born wild *Indians*, or *Americans*. And which is yet more lamentable, when once Men are grown up in this Ignorance, they are lost and undone, past all Remedy ; for sad Experience shews, that when they are past their Childhood and Youth, without any Impressions of Virtue and Holiness, it is an insuperable difficulty ever after to work in them any truly sincere, or lasting sense of Religion. So remarkably true is that Saying of the Wise Men, *Train up a Child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it* : The full import of which is, that if we do not train him up in the Right way, while he is a Child, he will hardly ever be brought into it afterwards. How deplorably is this verified, through the whole Rank of common Beggars, who growing up, destitute of all knowledge of the Laws of God, and below the Notice of human Laws, are generally the most corrupt and profligate part of Mankind ; without any sense or feeling of Religion ; and never use the Name of any Person in the Holy Trinity, but to prophane it.

it, in their loud and importunate Clamours for an Alms. So that what we bestow towards the Maintenance of Charity-Schools, is for feeding the Lambs of Christ with Spiritual Nourishment; it is for rescuing them out of the Jaws of Hell; it is for Building immortal Souls for Heaven, and everlasting Happiness; Souls as dear and precious in the sight of God, as those of our own Children, and equally the Price of his Blood.

Another great Consequence of our Charity-Schools, faith the same incomparable Prelate, is the Healing those Rents and Divisions, which are made in the Church, and a most effectual means of promoting Peace and Unity among Christians. As too many, who set up for Learning, and Refinement, do run into Infidelity; so, on the other Hand, Ignorance is the Mother of *Enthusiasm*; and this begets a Race of *Heresies* and *Schismatics*, which are in a great degree prevented by instructing Children, not in the Words only, but in the sense and meaning of the *Church-Catechism*: Making them acquainted with its Doctrines, Principles, and Liturgy; and creating in them a Reverence for all Things and Persons dedicated to the more immediate Service of God. This for ever after prevents

vents in them that Indifferency to their own Religion, and Lukewarmness, so expressly condemned in the Church of *Laudicea*, and which is so fatally prevailing in our own. This will keep them from being *toss'd too and fro*, and carried about with every *Wind of Doctrine*, and from any affectation of that shameful Halting between two Opinions, so much in Vogue and Fashion; so that they will walk uprightly, without a constant turn of the Head, and a side-look, even towards separate and contrary Communions. This will lay a Foundation for that Peace and Unity, that Brotherly Love and Christian Charity, in the next Generation, which is so notoriously wanting in this; for these poor Children, by these Means, will have this advantage over those of greater Fortune and Quality, that they will grow up without any Seasoning of Party Prejudice and Prepossession.

In the next place, it is worth while to take a short survey of the secular Advantages which so well plac'd and prudent a Charity will procure to the Publick. For it will contribute to the common good and benefit of Mankind. For 'tis not only for the Instruction of Children in divine Knowledge, for the Salvation of their Souls; but likewise to learn

learn them such things as shall first qualify them for it ; and then to bind them out to Trades and Callings. This renders them useful to themselves, and to the Common-Wealth : This rescues them from contracting such inveterate Habits of Idleness at first, which they can never after wear off ; and puts them upon getting their living by an honest Industry : This will considerably lessen that great Multitude of vagrant and wandering Beggars, which upbraids us to God and the World, and daily multiply, to the Disgrace as well as Curse of the Nation ; and unless the farther growth of them be prevented by Charity-Schools, and wholesome Laws for that purpose, may be the means of bringing down Judgments upon us.

But by seasoning so many Children with an early Sense of Religion, and taking them off from a whole Life of Idleness and Want, how many Immorality do we hinder, which they would be otherwise guilty of ? What a Flood of Iniquity do we stem ? How many Cheats and Thefts, Whoredoms, and Robberies, and Murders, will be effectually prevented, which, experience shews, it is not in the Power of Humane Laws to restrain ? All which, though committed by

by the Lowest Rank of People, yet come into a general Account with God; and are added to that Mass of Sin, which ripens a Nation for divine Vengeance. How many will by this means be relieved, not only from Ignorance, and Cold, and Nakedness, but from publick Shame, and Prison, and untimely Deaths! And is any thing more common, than for such as are brought to an unhappy end, in their last dying Words at the Place of their Execution, to lay all their Wickedness and Misery upon the want of some Care and Instruction in their Childhood? What need I say more? Whatever is given on this Occasion, is for reforming the World, as far as lies in each Charitable Man's Power, and laying up a Store both of Temporal and Spiritual Blessings to Posterity. It is for making
 ' many, who would otherwise never
 ' come to any Sense, either of natural or
 ' reveal'd Religion, good Christians, and
 ' good Members of the Common Wealth;
 ' good Parents, and good Children;
 ' good Masters and Mistresses, and
 ' good Servants: And, in short,
 ' good in every Condition or Relation of
 ' Life. It is not only for redeeming Multitudes from present Sin, and Danger,
 ' and Misery, who would be otherwise
 ' trained up, and exercis'd from their
 Infancy,

‘ Infancy, in all kind of Villany ; but
 ‘ enabling them to convey the same Blef-
 ‘ sings to those who come after them ;
 ‘ and they again will transmit them far-
 ‘ ther downwards, which is doing good
 ‘ through many Generations : And thus
 ‘ a Man may be the Instrument of un-
 ‘ speakable good to all Persons, who shall
 ‘ be born long after he is Dead : He has
 ‘ dispersed abroad, he hath given to the Poor,
 ‘ and in this sense his Righteousness remaineth
 ‘ for ever. Thus far that excellent Prelate.

Next to poor Children and Or-
 phans, poor decay'd Tradesmen, and
 industrious Day-Labourers, are great Ob-
 jects of our Pity and Bounty. To lend
 them Money, and give them Credit, to
 Trade with, or set them to Work, is a
 prudent and well chosen Charity, not
 only as it is a means to prevent the
 Ruin of so many Families, but as it helps
 declining House-keepers to retrieve their
 broken Fortunes, and breed up their
 Children, that they may not hereafter
 become burthensome to the Publick, or
 be forc'd to beg their Bread from Door
 to Door.

And here I cannot but observe, that
 the precipitate haft of Creditors has not
 contributed more to their Debtors undo-
 ing, than their own; for oftentimes, they
 put it out of the Power of their honest

Customers

Customers, by this means, to make them Satisfaction. Besides, to confine poor Insolvent Debtors, and thereby depriving them of the Liberty of Trading, and getting Money, is one of the most unchristian and extravagant things in the World. It is to punish a Man for non-Performance of Impossibilities, or to exact from him, what we hinder him from getting; which is to exceed the Cruelty of *Egyptian Task-Masters*.

There are many honest, industrious Tradesmen, of large Families, who do not thrive so well in the World, as they who pinch, and skrew up their Customers to get Rich; who fall into Decay, not through their own Fault, their Idleness, or Excess, but sometimes for want of Trade, or through the Frowns of Fortune, or unavoidable Accidents. Now, to give such Honest Men Time to work themselves out of Debt, to lend them Money, and give them Credit, to bestow our Bounty, and to make Collections for their Relief, to keep up their Spirits and Credit, before they quite sink, and are reduc'd to the lowest Ebb of Fortune, is a frugal as well as a noble Piece of Charity, as it prevents the Ruin of so many unhappy Families, and their becoming chargeable to the Publick. Whereas to hale a declining Debtor by the Throat,

to

to seize upon his Effects, to drag him into Prison, and at the same time to turn his miserable Family out of Doors, to beg their Bread from House to House, is an unaccountable Barbarity, and yet every Day's Practice ; by which means, and the Exorbitant Fees of Lawyers, Catch-poles, and Goalers, a poor Debtor is most frequently rendered for ever incapable of relieving his Family, retrieving his Loss, or cancelling his Obligations to his Creditors : And as if this relentless Temper was not inhuman enough, there are others so unchristian and uncharitable, who rejoice at the Misfortunes of their Fellow Tradesmen, and do all they can, underhand, to procure their Destruction, that they may ingross all the Trade to themselves, *and live alone in the Earth*, as the Prophet says, and who indeed are fitter for the Society of Beasts, than of Men. But let all that bear the Faces of Men, or the Names of Christians, beware of such a savage and barbarous Practice, which seldom escapes the Judgment of God, even in this World ; it being agreeable to the Methods of his Providence, to punish Men's Cruelty to one another, with the worst of Temporal Calamities, as well as eternal Ruin.

In

In the next place, that our Alms may have its due Effect, and operate to the best Advantage, we must observe the most proper Season to bestow our Alms upon; which is the third point to be considered.

The Apostle directs us to do good, *whilst we have Opportunity*; and therefore we must dispose of our Alms, not when we can best spare it, but when the Poor have most need of it. We must endeavour to prevent the Necessities of the Poor, and their Importunities for an Alms; it being the Temper of many generous Poor, to choose rather to Starve, than be put to the Shame and Disgrace of asking an Alms. Besides, the sooner we relieve an hungry Stomach, the less will serve to satisfie it; and the more opportunely we step in to the support of decay'd and sinking Families, the less will be the charge, which will accrue hereafter to our selves and the Publick. Whereas to defer giving our Alms till the Poor are ready to perish, is the same thing as administering Physick to a Man in the Agonies of Death, or to give Men Food to fill their Bellies, when they have lost their Appetites. If we give what is sufficient to satisfie a Man's present Necessity, (though it be but a Cup of cold Water) our Saviour assures us, it shall not

not lose its Reward. Now, what a wretched thing is it, for a Man to live always like a Muckworm, crawling on the Earth, and ever entombing himself in it, that cannot find in his Heart to part with any thing for the present, for fear of Beggarizing or Starving himself. They, I mean, who propose to leave something to the Poor when they die, *i. e.* when they can enjoy their Riches no longer. But is that a time to deal our Bread to the Hungry, or to cloath the Naked, when we can neither feed nor help our selves? Is that a time to relieve the Oppressed, when they are coming to our Funerals, and rejoicing at the Death of their Oppressors? How can Men give with Simplicity or Mercy, how can they bestow their Alms with Clearfulness, when they are going to their Graves, and reflecting on that just Tribunal, before which they are shortly to appear?

In short, I was Sick, and ye visited me,
I was in Prison, and ye came unto me, saith
our Saviour: Upon which Words, the
Pious Bishop of *Armagh* thus descants:
‘ These two Words (saith he) are remark-
able, and worthy the divine Wisdom,
‘ which are not to be taken only in the
‘ Figurative, but even in the Literal Sense,
‘ and are design’d to signify the actual
I going

‘ going to see the Poor: Not to stay till
 ‘ they come to us, but to go to them ;
 ‘ to view their Condition and Poverty
 ‘ with our own Eyes; to find them out,
 ‘ and acquaint our selves with their Mi-
 ‘ series ; and giving them our Alms with
 ‘ our own Hands. For as the very pre-
 ‘ sence of those who relieve them, is a
 ‘ comfort to the distressed and afflicted ;
 ‘ as we are hereby enabled to suit our
 ‘ selves to their several wants, and to dis-
 ‘ tribute our Bounty the more seasona-
 ‘ bly and prudently ; so it is no small
 ‘ improvement to our selves. Such as live
 an easy, luxurious, pleasurable Life, and
 know not the want of a Meal’s Meat,
 have no Notion of the Miseries of the
 Poor ; and are therefore of all People the
 most backward to relieve them. But one
 visit to any of those many Cottages, and poor
 Cells, where *Hunger*, and *Thirst*, and *Nakedness*,
 have taken up their Residence, would make
 them a little more compassionate and ten-
 der Hearted. If they were Eye-witnesses
 of the straits and difficulties which many
 poor House-keepers struggle with, who
 have no Work or Employment, and
 are ashamed to beg: If they did but
 hear their Childrens Cries for Bread, when
 they have none to give them; this would
 bring them to a more merciful Temper and
 Disposition: ‘ It would make them sensible

‘ of

' of the Bounty of God to themselves ; it
 ' would teach them to value his Blessings ;
 ' it would create in them a true Humi-
 ' lity and Lowliness of Mind, as seeing
 ' what they themselves would be, how
 ' miserable Objects of Charity and Com-
 ' passion, if they were in the same Con-
 ' dition. And now (saith he) let any
 ' Man tell me, what Effect or Influence
 ' can such things as these have upon a
 ' dying Man ? Or how they will ope-
 rate to all the Wise ends and purposes of
 them, upon them, when he is Dead ? To
 which let me add, that the visiting the
 Poor in Person, and relieving them with
 our own Hands, is the only sure way to
 satisfie our selves, that they really want
 what we give ; and that what we give,
 is not misapplied, or lessened, or lost : For
 the Poor oftentimes comes short of our
 Bounty, in whole or in part, because en-
 trusted in a second Hand : There being
 many *Judas's* of that sort, who love to
 be Fingering the Poors Money, and un-
 der pretence of Compassion for them, go
 a begging about for Alms, but to make
 Bags for themselves. Besides all this,
 there are many things which poor House-
 keepers want, besides *Bread, Drink, and*
Cloathing ; but how can we adapt our
 Bounty to their Necessities, without en-

quiring into them, and visiting them our selves? And for this Reason, it were to be wish'd, that the *Overseers* of the Poor should be oblig'd to give them their Weekly Allowance in ready Money, and not force them to take it out in this or that Commodity, which lies most upon Hand, and that sometimes at so exorbitant a Rate, that in some places, the Poor are by these means robb'd of half the small Pittance order'd for them; which is a sore and sad Oppression, and quite defeats the end of those Charitable Statutes, which have been made for their Relief.

It is no small discredit to Christianity, that there are any poor Christians amongst us. But yet is it a greater discredit, that Christians should need Acts of Parliament to relieve each other: Christians, I say, who ought to shew so much Contempt of the World, as to mind nothing more, whilst they live in it, but to do good to all Men, especially to *those of the Household of Faith*. But O! the miserable Covetousness of Worldly minded Men, whom neither the fear of God's Displeasure, nor *Regard to Man's Laws*, can prevail upon to pity their poor Brethren, partakers of the same Flesh and Blood; insomuch, that the *Overseers* of the Poor themselves, who are so strictly bound to take,

take care of them, and supply their Necessities, are their greatest Oppressors, and by whose means, Appearances, and Remonstrances, the Poor in many Places suffer a great deal more than they would do, if Acts of Parliament had never been made for their Relief. For by these Statutes, the Poor are forbid to Beg; and yet, if, according to the Tenor of these Statutes, they Sue to the Magistrate for Relief, the *Overseers* will appear against them; and they are the more emboldned to do so, because of the sordid Temper of too many Justices, who are Deaf to the Cries and Complaints of the Poor; and care not what Misery they endure, so they may but save their Money, and live in Ease and Luxury themselves. Which naturally brings me to consider,

Fourthly, The Measure or Quantity of our Alms. Now we are commanded to be *Liberal according to our Power*; and if we have much, to give *Plenteously*; and to be *Rich in good Works*; to be ready to *distribute and willing to communicate*. There is scarce any Man so Poor, who cannot now and then give an Alms. One Poor Man oftentimes relieves another; but the Rich of this World are requir'd to abound, and to be as bountiful to the Poor, as God hath been liberal to them:

And yet most of them bestow an Alms so sparingly, that it is rather a Contrivance to get rid of the Poor at their Doors, than any real Benefit to them. *Pliny* tells us of a Tree, whose Leaves are as broad as any *Target*, but its Fruit is no bigger than a *Bean* : A fit Emblem of a Rich Man, who pretends to be Religious, and cannot find in his Heart to give Liberally. Under the Law of *Moses*, towards the Building of the Tabernacle, the poorer sort of *Jews* were requir'd to give *Badgers Skins, and Goats-Hair only*, and that was accepted. But the Rich gave *Purple, and Gold, and Jewels*, and so were not only Rich in Estate, but Rich in good Words too, *Exod. 35. 5, 6.* And so God doth expect, that as we abound in Wealth, so we should abound in good Works : As we have the Precedence of our Neighbours in Estates, Honour, or Credit, so we should have the Precedence of them in the best Sense, in our Alms and good Works ; for he that soweth Plentifully, shall reap also Plentifully : And our Saviour saith, *to whom much is given, of him much shall be requir'd*, as well in the Measure, as the Quality of our Works ; which is the last Point to be consider'd.

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5. We are required to give, not grudgingly, or of *Necessity*, but with a cheerful Heart, as well as a Liberal Hand ; and the Truth is, these two commonly go together : We must be ready to distribute, and willing to communicate. *But this is a hard Saying, who can bear it.* But if Men were as willing, as they are able to give Liberally, neither the *Number* nor *Necessities* of the Poor would be so great as they are ; and yet that little that comes from us, comes with so much Reluctancy, and Discontent, that a poor Man of a liberal Nature would almost choose to Starve, than be at the Expence of so many Importunities for an Alms.

Many have been of Opinion, that the World is near towards an End ; and many Reasons they had to confirm them in that Opinion. But nothing need persuade us to this Belief more, than that almost every Man, at this time, doth all he can for himself, and seeks to undo every Man besides. So that God must needs come shortly to destroy this World, or if this holds on much longer, we shall certainly destroy it our selves. For if we neglect to help and assist one another, what will become of the greatest part of us ? And what will become of those savage, relentless Creatures, at the last Day,

who care not what Misery, or Beggary, others endure, so they may wax Rich, and bear Rule, and domineer over Men *like themselves*. But the Day is coming, when every Rich Man shall give an Account of his Stewardship ; and then the Question will be, not how great have you liv'd, or how rich have you died, or what Mannors or Estates have you left behind you. But, how many hungry Bellies have you satisfy'd, how many naked Christians have you Cloath'd ? How many poor Prisoners have you Visited and Reliev'd ? And in a Word, how much good have you done in the time of your mortal Life ; and to how many sorts of People have you done it ? Then an irreversible Sentence will pass upon every Man, according to his Works. Which leads me, in the last place, To shew the great Power and Efficacy of *Almsgiving* ; for, according to the Doctrine of the Scriptures, of our Church, and of our Homilies, God will, at the last Day, remember our Works, which proceed from Love : He will abundantly pardon the merciful Man, purely for his Charity and Mercy to his fellow Creatures. That God should be any ways oblig'd by our Alms, so as to be bound in strict Justice to reward us for them at the last Day, though we die without Repentance, is a Doctrine which we *Protestants*

testants disown and detest. But then we maintain, upon good Grounds, that an Alms bestowed in Charity, is of all other Duties the most prevailing with God, for these following Reasons.

1. Because it is the best Testimony of our Gratitude to God, for that plentiful Provision which he hath dealt out to us, that we can outwardly profess.
2. Because it is the Fruit of our Faith, in, and dependance upon the Promises of God, that he will make them good to us at the Resurrection of the just.
3. Because our readiness to part with our Substance, for the Relief of others, is a certain Indication, that our Hearts are not divided between God and *Mammon*; that though Riches do increase, *we do not set our Hearts upon them*: That we do look upon them only as Blessings, when we have the Heart to do good with them: But when they minister to Excess or Vanity, Pride or Oppression, they then become *Snares and Temptations*, and drown Men in *Perdition and Destruction*.

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Now to recommend this great Duty the more effectually to our Practice; though we *Protestants* deny, that Almsgiving (exclusive of Repentance and Holiness) can procure to us the Pardon of Sin, and the favour of God; yet we say, that no other Duty whatsoever hath so many gracious Promises annex'd to it as this; and though our Saviour be the only true and proper Sacrifice for Sin, yet an Alms bestow'd upon our Fellow Christians, for his sake, hath in it a subordinate Efficacy towards the procuring the Remission of our Sins:

Vid. Dr. Smalldridge his Sermon of Cb.
And this we are Taught to infer from our Lord's own Words. *Give Alms of such things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you.* The occasion of which Words was, our Saviour's sitting down to Meat, without first washing his Hands, contrary to the Custom of the *Pharisees*, who thereupon accuse him of acting contrary to the Tradition of the *Elders*. But he, to justify himself, as well as instruct his Followers, tells them, *That the way to cleanse the Soul, was to give Alms to the Poor*, putting them in mind of the Exposition of their own Rabbins, upon that Saying of *Solomon*, *By Mercy and Truth Iniquity is purged*, *Prov. 16. 6.* And upon *Tob.* and *Eccles.*

Eccles. Alms will deliver from Death, and purge away all Sin: That they suffer not to come into darkness; that Water will quench a Flaming Fire, and Alms maketh an Atonement for Sins, Tob. 12. 8.

There are many other Temporal Blessings promis'd to the Merciful Alms-giver, besides the Pardon of Sin, which indeed is the greatest of all Blessings: so saith Solomon, *The liberal Soul shall be made Fat, and he that Watereth, shall be Watered also himself. Riches and Plenteousness shall be in his House. Blessed is the Man that provideth for the Sick and Needy, saith the Psalmist, the Lord shall deliver him in the time of Trouble. I shall Multiply my Days as the Sand*, saith Job, *because I have delivered the Poor, and him that hath no helper.* So that he who gives Alms of such things as he has, or according as God hath bless'd him, is entitled by his Promises to the Pardon of Sin, to Longævity, to Riches and Plenty, and deliverance from Trouble.

In a Word, *God will Bless him in the House, and in the Field, in his Person, and in his Posterity, in his Goods, and in his Name, in his Body, and in his Soul.* If we be ready to hear the Cries of the Poor, God will be ready to hear our Prayers, and

and pour down his Benefits upon us ;
he will speak comfortably to our Souls
in Afflictions, and either make our Bed
in our Sickness, or deliver us at the Hour
of Death, and in the Day of Judgment.

Glory be to GOD.

POST-





POSTSCRIPT.

*The Necessity of Parochial Communion;
for the preservation of Peace and
Charity.*

*A Sermon Preach'd before the Right
Honourable Sir Gilbert Heathcote,
Kt. Lord-Mayor, and the Honoura-
ble Court of Aldermen, in the Cathedral
Church of St. Paul, On Sunday De-
cember 17th, 1710.*

THE Subject of this Sermon being
*uncommon, and exceeding use-
ful and necessary, cannot but find Accep-
tance with all good Christians, who desire
the Peace and Edification of the Church:*
And

And this I hope is sufficient to justifie the *Re-publication* thereof.

I am not concern'd what Judgment any one shall pass on the Meanness of the *Performance*, or my own Unworthiness; because the *Wiseſt* and *Best* are ever *Candid* and *Charitable*, and such I am sure will commend the *Zeal*, and excuse the *Defect*.

As to the *Self-conceited*, who are given to calumniate, I pity their *Weakneſſ*, and despise their *Censure*, as much as I abhor their *Practice*. My Aim and hearty Desire is to benefit *All*, and offend *None*; and the Reader of the following *well-meant Discouſe*, if he will so receive it, let him receive it.

1 Cor. iii. 5, 6, 7.

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollo? But Ministers by whom you believed, as the Lord hath given unto every one.

I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the Increase.

So then neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that Watereth, but God that giveth the Increase.

PAUL, that Great Apostle of the Gentiles, and Saint of this Place, being now at Ephesus, and hearing of great Disorders in the Church which he had planted at Corinth, writes to them this Epistle to regulate them.

He begins with reprobating their Schism and Divisions, which were first occasion'd by their partial preferring of Ministers, and setting them up in opposition to one another: For so, as Expounders tell us, St. Chrysostom and Theodoret testifie. Corinth being then a rich and flourishing City, the Poorer sort of Christians were inclin'd to choose for their Teachers those that were Rich, and so most able to relieve their Necessities; but the Richer sort chose some of the most Learned and Popular Philosophers, whom they

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magnify'd above the Apostle, and judged to be capable of Teaching them more than he, or others constituted by him, were able to do.

This occasion'd great Division, Detraction, Envy, and Strife amongst them, which the Apostle sharply reproves in the first Chapter, and earnestly entreats them, for the future, to avoid. To that end, he shews, that they ought not to set up the Ministers of Christ, in opposition to each other, or extol any of them, upon account of their Wealth, Parts, or Eloquence, to the Disparagement and Contempt of the rest; and therefore says he, in the Words of my Text, *Who then is Paul, or who is Apollo? I have planted the Gospel amongst you, Apollo water'd; him I left to take care of, to instruct, and confirm you in the Faith; but after all, it is God that gave the Increase.* So then, *neither is he that planteth any thing the more to be preferred upon that Account, as if the Success of his Doctrine depended on his Skill, and Sufficiency, nor he that waters; but we ought to ascribe the Glory of all our Success, in the work of the Ministry, to the Grace of God, working on willing and teachable Tempers, that giveth the Increase.*

From

From this Design and Explanation of the Text it appears, that one Excuse, which the *Corinthians* had form'd, to justify their *Schism*, was the pretence of better *Edification*. And it is as easie to observe, that this Pretence has prevail'd in all Ages of the Church, to the great Scandal of Christianity ever since; insomuch, that the Divisions it has rais'd among Christians have hardned Infidels in their Unbelief, and been the main hindrance of their Conversion.

Since then, this pretence is so plausible, and so commonly pleaded, not only by *Separatists*, but also by those of our own Church, who despise their own Parish, and Minister, as the only reason why they do not Communicate so often with their Pastor as they ought, *viz.* *Because he is not, in their Opinion, so edifying as another*; I beg leave therefore, in Discouraging upon so uncommon, yet so very necessary a Subject, to consider what these Men mean by *Edification*.

This I shall do, by shewing,

I. *Negatively*, what it is not.

II. And *affirmatively*, what it is, and wherein it really consists.

III. After this I will lay before you some general Directions, whereby you

may attain unto true, Substantial, and Saving Edification.

I. Some People are so weak and fanciful, as to place this *Edification* in sudden *Heats*, surprizing *Motions*, and *Enthusiastick Raptures*. That Preacher only is by these accounted Edifying, that strains beyond his Strength, stretching and spending himself, to a ridiculous Affectation, to engage their Attention, and make them serious. These Men are Hot and Cold by Fits, and their *Edification* rises or falls like a Weather-glass, with the Heat, Constitution, or Temper of their Teacher. They ascribe their *Edification* altogether to his *Natural Abilities*, his *Strength of Voice*, or *Elegancy of Style*, his good *Assurance*, and bold *Behaviour*. He that wants these Qualifications, his Presence is weak and mean, his *Doctrine*, though it be never so sound or wholesome, is accounted insipid and contemptible.

Thus these Men consider their Teachers only in their *Natural Capacities*, not as *Spiritual Pastors*, whom God has placed over them, whom for that reason they ought to cleave to, and thank God for whatever their Personal Merits be, if there be any Strength in St. Paul's Argument in my Text. For, says he, to this

this Effect, Edification does not depend solely, nor chiefly, upon the Sufficiency of Ministers, but on the *Grace of God that giveth the Increase.* There is no doubt of it, the Ministers of Christ are to become all things unto all Men, after St. Paul's Example, *so they may gain some;* and consequently they are to condescend to the Capacities, and Dispositions of their Hearers, so they may thereby the more effectually forward *their Salvation.* But this surely is better done, and with more Safety and Success, when they strive to move, and persuade, and instruct the People committed to *their Charge* with cool and sedate Methods, with *Strength of Argument, and Dint of Reason, and unaffected Seriousness;* for the way to make Men truly *Edifying and Good,* is to make them first *Judicious and Wise.* Look into all the Errors that ever crept into the Church, and you will find that the way whereby they have been so successfully propagated, was the Pretence of *better Edification,* which the ignorant People plac'd in extravagant Noise and Heat, frightful and finical Gestures, outragious Blasphemies, and impertinent Harangues, which being perform'd with so much affected Energy and Zeal, the comitton

People swallow'd down for Divine Raptures and Heavenly Doctrines.

Hence some of our Church foolishly argue, *If the Methods which Separatists use to draw away the People from the Church, be, by your own Confession, so successful and prevailing, then you the Ministers of the Church should use the same Method to prevent the People's departing from you; and therefore you should Preach and Pray after the same manner as Separatists do; and to prevent a greater Evil, condescend to the Weakness and Folly of the ignorant and giddy Multitude.*

But I have observ'd already what Mischief this Method of *Rome* and *Geneva* has done to the Christian Church in all Ages; and they who continue this Practice in the *Establish'd Church of England*, encourage *idle* and *fickle* People to wander from Church to Church, by drawing them from their own Minister, and by prejudicing *them* against *him*; and this oftentimes occasions *Anger*, *Envy* and *Detraction*, to the great Joy and Pleasure of our Enemies; so that when such *Preachers* are removed, or when the People come to dislike them, (as they most commonly do by degrees) they drop from them into the *Conventicle*; and when they are *tyr'd* there, they sink at last as low

low as *Quakerism*, or *Atheism*, where they are fixt. For as one Sin commonly draws on another after it, so these foolish People having thus set out wrong at first, and gone on so far, it is almost as impracticable to bring them to their right Wits again, as it is to restore *Lunaticks* to their Reason and Sense. Even some of the wiser *Nonconformists* themselves have complain'd of one another, and their followers, for this Practice, *alleging that this Factious Disposition in the Hearers of God's Word, hath been in all Ages, the Cause of much Confusion in the Church of God, and hindred the Fruit of the Gospel of Christ, and made them uncapable of Profit by the Word;* and if so, the People ought to be often and seriously admonish'd, to adhere to their own proper and lawful Minister, lest they fall into a grievous Sin, as a Judgment of God upon them, for Despising those whom he hath set over them, under pretence of better *Edification.*

It has been from the beginning a standing Order in the *Christian Church*, and it is a Law of our own *Constitution*, that every Pastor should have the Charge of a particular *Congregation*, and every *Congregation* should have their particular Pastor to depend upon, to prevent those

Confusions and Disorders in the Church, which the Contempt of this Order has introduc'd amongst us. It is then a Duty incumbent, as upon the Minister to take care of his *Flock*, and to feed them; so likewise upon his *Flock* to hear his Voice, and to be willing to be fed by him.

They therefore, who out of Prejudice, or for any other Reason, hear the Voice of Strangers, which our Saviour says, (*the Sheep that are his will not do*) and forsake their own Shepherd, sin against their own Souls; and not only discourage him in the Execution of his *Office*, but openly affront his *Person*, and expose his *Function*. So that they who think they are better edifi'd by repairing to other Churches, and can do *these things*, do but too plainly and miserably deceive themselves. For since our own Ministers are Sound and Orthodox, Pious and Exemplary, we shall certainly profit more by our constant Attendance on them, than we shall do by following Strangers, let them be never so able and popular, according to St. Paul's way of Reasoning in my Text. And this leads me, in the 2d place, to shew.

II. *Affirmatively, What true Edification is, and wherein it really does consist.*

Edification (according to the Original import of the Word) is a *Spiritual Building*; signifying, that a *Christian* must be always improving himself in the *Knowledge* of our Lord *Jesus*, till he *become perfect and entire, lacking nothing*, as the *Apostle* expresseth himself; till he arrives to a right *Faith*, *being rooted and grounded in it*, and able to *comprehend with all Saints, what is the Depth and Height, Length and Breadth, and to know the Love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge*: *A Love, a Mystery, which we should rather admire, than be desirous to know and comprehend.*

A false Opinion is crept into many *mistaken, otherwise well-meaning Christians amongst us*, who are apt to imagine, that *Edification* consists chiefly in the *Knowledge* of hard and intricate *Points of Divinity*, and that the plain, easy, and only necessary *Truths of the Gospel*, are scarce worth their *Notice, or Enquiry*. Indeed, this Opinion hath been of late *reviv'd, and propagated more industriously than ever, to the great Scandal of Religion, and the Disturbance of the publick*

Peace, by evil Men and Seducers who *craf-*
tily handling the Word of God, indulge and
improve this Notion, and humour the com-
mon People with it, by persuading them,
that the Knowledge of nice Points, such
as *Predestination* and *Election*, the *Nature*
of *Angels* and their *Order*, the *Present*
State of the deceas'd, &c. is saving and
necessary; and for this the common Peo-
ple admire *them*, and account them abler
and sounder Teachers than those who
plainly declare to them the Will of God,
and the *Necessity of Faith towards him*, and
Repentance from Dead Works. But St.
Paul, on the contrary, determines, that
it is sufficient to know Jesus Christ, and him
Crucified; *i. e.* to know him to be the
only Son of God, the Saviour of the World,
the Design of his blessed *Advent*, and the
Nature of his Kingdom. To know the
Trinity in Unity, as it is revealed in
Scripture, and explain'd by the Catholick
Church, together with all the other Arti-
cles of our *Creed*, is sufficient Knowledge
of Salvation for plain, honest, and well mean-
ing Christians; so that in truth, these are
the only necessary Points which we are
commanded to search after and *hold fast*,
without wavering; and therefore our *Edi-*
fication is, as the *Apostle* tells us, *going on*

to Perfection in the Knowledge of these things, and in an entire and full Conviction of the Certainty of them in our Hearts, so as that it may work in us, a right Faith, Sincere Repentance, and the Fruit of good Living. For to be a Christian indeed, and a Perfect Man in Christ Jesus, we must add to our Faith, Virtue, to *Vertue*, Godliness. Our Knowledge of the Christian Doctrine will but enhance our Guilt, if whilst we are improving our Understanding, we do not regulate our Lives, and mend our Manners too.

The way to do both with Success, is to place Religion not so much in *hearing* Sermons, as in *reading* the *Scriptures*, and *saying* our *Prayers*, to come to this *Beauty of Holiness*, this *Representative Choir of Angels*, not out of Course or Custom, but *Zeal* and *Conscience*; to come to *Church*, not *Occasionally*, but *Constantly*. At the same time that we join together in *Publick Prayers*, to participate together of the *Holy Sacrament* also: And in a word, to be as attentive to the *Reader*, as the *Preacher*, and to a *Chapter* from the *Desk*, as to a *Sermon* from the *Pulpit*.

Upon the whole matter, we cannot truly edify our Souls, but under a *Lawful Ministry* because it is impossible for God

to

to set his Seal to a Lie, or to give his Blessing but to Means which are just and warrantable. The *means of Grace*, are the *Word, Sacraments, Preaching and Prayer*, and these must be administered by Persons qualif'd and call'd by God to dispense the same; to receive Benefit therefore by them, we must constantly attend on our *Pastors* without Prejudice, or preferring one Minister before another. Which is the Second thing we are to consider, as useful to help our *Edification*.

We must consider, that the Holy Scriptures recommend all Virtues, and condemn all Vices, such as *Drunkenness, Adultery, Fornication, Avarice, Schism and Divisions*. And tho' the Ministers of the Gospel are to tell Men plainly that unless they repent of these things, they must Perish; yet you know, by too sad Experience, that if they do in this Case discharge their Duties faithfully, they are so unhappy as to be too frequently branded with the odious Character of a *railing, uncharitable, and busie Sett of Men*, as if there were no such Sins in the World. This is no new thing; for even St. Paul, as we have heard in the second *Lesson* of this Day, was tax'd by certain lewd Fellows

lows of the baser sort, with being the Person that turn'd the World upside down, ACTS 17. 5. this is such an unaccountable Prejudice, that it ought not to be once nam'd among reasonable Men, much less among Christians. But there is another excuse, which many Ignorant and lukewarm People make use of, to Justifie their Contempt of their proper Ministers, viz. they pertly tell us, that the Ministers themselves are divided, and they know not who are in the right, and therefore to be safe, resolve to join to none; lest if they did to any, they should fall into the same Error with them.

But since we are all the Ministers of Christ, and equally concerned in the same common Salvation, so ought Men to account of us equally, as the Stewards of the Mysteries of the Grace of God; and no difference in Opinion between our Teachers, ought to alienate our Affections from any of them, or can justifie our withdrawing our selves from our Attendance on their Labours. For we read that even the Apostles themselves had Contentions about some Indifferent Matters among them for a season. St. Paul, withstood St. Peter to his Face; himself testifies it, and the Contention between him and Barnabas was so great, that they parted asunder; and yet these

these Differences did not exempt their Converts from that Obedience, Love and Esteem they ow'd them for their Works sake: *Who then, Brethren, is Paul, or who is Apollo?* Who is this Person, or that, but Ministers, as the Lord hath given to every one to profit withal. Christ is not divided; we are all equally his Ambassadors, though plac'd in different Order and Stations, so Ministering to one another as every one hath received the gift of the manifold Grace of God; who call'd in the Church, First Apostles, Secondly Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the Edifying of the Body of Christ; till we all come into a perfect Man, into the measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ. But if notwithstanding, when we have overcome these Prejudices, we shall afterwards complain we cannot profit by some Ministers, by reason of their Weakness, or Natural Incapacity; give me leave then to observe further, that this is, because we place too much of our Religion in hearing Sermons, and hardly nothing of it in doing after them. If we attended more duly on the Service of the Church, with Seriousness, Reverence and Attention, we should Edify more by that, than by all the most fluent Discourses

(III)

Discourses we hear, how many soever they be. For our *Liturgy* is of its self sufficient to Edify our Souls, because there is not any Article of Faith, nor any Moral Duty, but what is contain'd and usefully apply'd in one part or other of our excellent *Liturgy*.

Another reason, why we should prefer the *Liturgy* to Preaching is, because it contains those Excellent Prayers, all admirably fitted to our particular wants, which being frequently offer'd to God will not fail to bring down to us, *that are Doers of the word, and not Hearers only*, *that Grace of God, which giveth the Increase*. So that in very deed, it is but a poor Excuse for any one, who neglects the Service of the Church, *to say he cannot Edify by the Preacher*, seeing the Church hath a Remedy for it, if his Complaint be just; and if it be not, the fault is not then in the Minister, but in himself. In a word, let a Man come to all the Parts of our *Liturgy*, but with an Humble, Teachable, and an unprejudic'd Heart, he may Edify very well by the meanest of those that attend at *God's Altar*, even though he should do nothing more than join with him in the Publick Service of the Church.

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Errata,
 Pref. instead of *Western*, Read *Northern Parts*; &c.
 Page 50. instead of *Father's* Read *Father*.

